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# CATTLE SHIPS

SAMUEL PLIMSOLL

# CATTLE SHIPS

This vessel and cattle are drawn to scale. When the vessel rolls or pitches so as to throw the weight of the cattle on the lashings, they break adrift and are thrown together in a heap on the deck, slippery from dung and urine. When this happens the men cannot go amongst the helpless animals even to give them water. They are thrown from side to side in a confused mass till they die.

# CATTLE SHIPS

BEING

THE FIFTH CHAPTER OF

MR. PLIMSOLL'S SECOND APPEAL

FOR OUR SEAMEN

[*Published separately and out of its turn on account of its pressing urgency.*

*Not published before, lest the Case should be deemed incomplete*]

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S. PLIMSOLL.

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# CATTLE SHIPS

THE state of things I shall herein try to make plain is only of recent growth; but it involves such cruelty to animals, and so much loss of life to seamen, that I should have given it precedence of my last chapter—*i.e.*, that on Provisions—had my investigation of it been then sufficiently matured to have enabled me to do any sort of justice to its importance.

My attention, however, was only drawn to it in any particular manner in January last.

Since then I have given all the diligence to its investigation which was compatible with the duty of promoting and watching the Bill which will put a stop to overloading, and which I have the great happiness of saying received the Royal Assent on the 9th of June last. One word here on the happy

results which may be expected of this law. These may be judged by the fact (vouched for by the Board of Trade) that the average annual loss of life in 'Missing' Vessels alone (one of five heads under which losses are classified), over a period of eight years, has been 944; and from the further fact, that the evidence of Mr. Rothery, the late Wreck Commissioner, shows that 46 per cent. of these losses (equal to 434 lives per annum) has been found by the Courts of Inquiry to have been caused by overloading.

The enforcement of the carefully-adjusted load-lines, recommended by one of the strongest Committees ever appointed, will put a final end to this dreadful practice. Thank God for that!

This leaves me free for other work.

In common, no doubt, with other readers of the daily papers, I have often seen short paragraphs announcing that such and such a ship, cattle laden, had arrived after a stormy passage, having lost overboard a considerable number of the cattle with which she commenced her homeward trip; &c.

It was not, however, until January last, during

This vessel and cattle are drawn to scale. When the vessel rolls or pitches so as to throw the weight of the cattle on the lashings, they break adrift and are thrown together in a heap on the deck, slippery from dung and urine. When this happens the men cannot go amongst the helpless animals even to give them water. They are thrown from side to side in a confused mass till they die.

the anxiety felt by myself and others about the safety of the steamship 'Erin,' then overdue, that I concluded to inquire into this aspect of shipping business as opportunity served.

The 'Erin' sailed from New York in December, 1889, with 527 cattle on board, for London, and has never since been heard of; she had 74 men on board.

The first thing it appeared to me to be necessary to ascertain, was why cattle for food are imported alive at all, seeing that great quantities of beef are imported in a refrigerated state from the same ports in America from which live cattle are sent, and in a frozen state (there is a great difference in the two methods) from the Antipodes—Australia and New Zealand.

We received 46,778 tons of meat from America, and 26,566 tons from Australia, last year (1889).

The American meat (refrigerated) is cooled down nearly to freezing-point, but not quite (34°); it is sufficiently cold to keep it sweet and good during the voyage, and also much longer if required.

The meat from the Antipodes, however, which is

frozen, is reduced to a much lower temperature than freezing-point—in fact, its temperature is frequently reduced so low as 15°, which necessarily ruptures by expansion the small vessels which contain the juices of the meat, part of which, therefore, are lost when the meat is thawed out and cut up—just as you lose part of the juice of an orange when you cut it in two, across. This is not the worst result of freezing the meat and reducing its temperature so much lower than seems to be needful. When the meat thus frozen is brought into the open air, it condenses the moisture which is in the surrounding atmosphere, and becomes, first damp, then wet, then very wet—just as, when you place a piece of ice in your tumbler of water on the dinner-table, the glass, becoming colder than the air of the room, condenses the moisture which is in the surrounding air; this moisture then settles, as dew or in small beads, upon the outer surface of the glass. Some people erroneously suppose that this moisture has come through the glass, just as the butchers suppose (but quite erroneously) that the wet upon the frozen meat has exuded from it.

The effect, however, is the same : the wet affects the colour and appearance of the meat just as much as if it had been placed in water for many hours, and gives it a sodden and disagreeable appearance, which prejudicially affects its selling-value very much, though I am assured by a scientific man it does not impair its nutritive qualities.

It appears to me that the temperature of frozen meat could be brought up to that of the air around without this injury to it.

If the meat, before being brought out of the cold storage, were painted with or dipped into melted fat, this envelope of fat would not prevent the entrance into the meat of caloric (cold is the absence of heat), but would protect the meat from having the moisture condensed upon it ; it (the moisture) would be condensed on the veneer of melted fat, from which it would drop without getting near the meat at all. Then the fat could be wiped off with a hot cloth, and the meat would be as it was before it was frozen ; or the meat could, probably, be protected by linen or cotton wrappers during the change. One cannot be sure without trying ; but, if I were a dealer or

butcher, I certainly should try these plans, or some other cognate to them.

With the 'refrigerated' meat this is not the case: it gradually assimilates in temperature to the

Smithfield. Outside. Supplies arriving. Each carcass suspended so as to be shapely and spotless.

air around it without ceasing to remain dry, and is therefore much more pleasing to the eye.

I have made many visits of inspection to the Metropolitan Meat Market at Smithfield, and have

always received most patient attention from Mr. Wylde, the chief inspector, and from the various salesmen, of whom I made numerous, and, I fear, even tedious inquiries.

Amongst other questions I asked was the following:—'Suppose we were now in New York, and bought a hundred oxen, and had fifty of them killed, and sent here in a refrigerated state, and sent the other fifty over alive; which of the two lots would give the best beef?'

'Well, that depends upon what you mean by "best."

'The best to *eat* would be that which came over as dead meat. The animals would be killed in a cool state—in their usual state—and the meat being kept cool enough to prevent anything like decay—kept, in fact, as it would be in an English nobleman's or gentleman's larder—would simply be "well hung," and be more tender for the keeping; but it's not so nice to look at as the beef of that which is brought over alive.'

The beef of that which is brought over alive is injured as the meat of over-driven cattle is, only

ten times as much;[1] but then, as it is killed and dressed by English butchers, who are the best in the world (we have dead meat from everywhere, and so can judge), it cannot be distinguished from British bred and fed, and so it fetches a higher price, as the importer and carcass-butchers in Deptford, Birkenhead, Glasgow, &c., all send this meat to market as "best Scotch," or "town killed," which means here "English."

'There is a great difference between English killing and butchering and American. The English kill the animal in a moment by a blow from a pole-axe; the American puts a chain round the hind legs, just above the hocks, and then hoists the animal by machinery clear of the ground, the head, of course, being downwards.

'They then cut its throat, and so kill it; but the meat of the shanks (where the chain was) is much swollen, discoloured by extravasated blood, and often

[1] On three occasions I saw some hind quarters the fat of which was very yellow—much deeper in colour than others near them. I asked the reason of this, and was told they were from oxen landed alive. The animals suffer from the sea voyage, and they become bilious; the biliary duct is disordered, and the bile discolours the fat in the way noticed by me.

torn. And that is one of the signs to tell them by, as the shanks of cattle killed in England are clean, natural, and shapely. Another difference is in the treatment of the veins upon the surface of the

Hind quarter of a bullock, American killed and dressed.

Hind quarter of a cow, English killed and dressed.

fat of the hind quarters. An English butcher carefully removes with his knife all those veins before the carcass gets cold, and then he wrings a cloth out of water as hot as he can bear it, and carefully wipes the meat down; the water removes the

traces of blood, and the heat of the cloth melts the thinnest possible surface of the fat; and this being smoothed over gives the meat that beautiful appearance you see' (pointing to a half bullock), 'without a

Half of bullock, English killed and dressed.

speck upon it. This is not done by American butchers, but all these veins remain upon the meat, and lower its selling-value, as it is seen at a glance to be American. A third point is, that near the rump there is a small quantity of fat of a light grey

colour. The English butcher neatly removes this, and puts it with the tallow-fat; it is not removed from the American beef, and is unsightly. These

Sketch showing the care with which calves (only partially skinned) are brought to market.

and other differences are infallible guides to a knowledge of the source of supply, but are all, of course, absent in the case of cattle imported alive, and killed in England, and the shop-butcher cannot distinguish

—no one can—this American meat killed in England from Scotch and English.

'It is not the American producer who is in fault;

Sketch showing the care of English butchers to avoid marring the appearance of lambs in moving them from place to place.

the meat he sends over is plainly seen to be American, and he obtains no portion of the gain which is secured by the exporter or importer of live cattle

from the misrepresentation of imported cattle as "Scotch" or "English." It all goes to the sender of the cattle, who defends himself from the charge of

Half of bullock, English killed and dressed.

Half of bullock, English killed and dressed.

calling and selling his meat as "English" and "Scotch," by saying boldly, "It is English."

'The American graziers, years ago, to improve American stock, gave immense prices in England for bulls of pure breed. As much as 2,000*l.*, 3,000*l.*, and even 4,000*l.*, were given for a single animal,

and their stock is now as good as ours. Look at a cargo being landed at Deptford or elsewhere : you see "Shorthorns," and "Herefords," and "Polled

Half of a bull, English killed and dressed.

Scots" as clearly as in England ; "it is English," only bred and fed in America.'

There seems a want in this defence, I think. Joseph Rodgers & Sons, Sheffield, are famed for the excellence of their cutlery ; it is made of steel of

the hoop L brand Ⓛ, if I remember correctly. But there are other makers of table-cutlery in Sheffield who also use this steel, and are considered by people in Sheffield who know, to produce cutlery in all respects as good as that of Joseph Rodgers & Sons; but if they induced people to believe, by false marks, that their cutlery was Joseph Rodgers & Sons' cutlery, they would soon hear of it. The fact is, that a manufacturer's good reputation, though imponderable, and also impalpable, is an asset of great value, and sometimes counts for much money in converting a private concern into a public company; and why the English grazier should deem a reputation for excellence which is world-wide, and which has been built up by generations of care, a thing of no value, to be used or abused by middlemen for their own gain in selling as 'English' breeding and feeding, meat which was neither born, bred, nor fed in Britain, is somewhat of a puzzle to me.

Before I leave this part of the subject, I may say that the sources of supply of carcasses of mutton, also, can be instantly indicated by little differences of

dressing and appearance, which space prevents me from particularising.

So true is this, that a shop-butcher can tell you, when he sees a carcass of mutton, whether it comes

Australian mutton—each sheep wrapped in calico ; excellent mutton, but easily distinguishable from mutton fed and killed at home.

from Canterbury or Auckland in New Zealand, or from Australia, or from the River Plate, or from Germany—that is, if it comes as mutton. If it is killed in England, he can't. There is the colour of the bark

(the sheet of red meat, no thicker than a shilling, which covers the side of the animal, from the junction of the leg with the body, to that of the shoulder), rosy-red in a full-grown, healthy sheep, when it is

Sketch showing the care taken by English butchers to avoid bruising or tearing the carcasses, so as to preserve their good appearance.

called 'cherry bark'; much paler in a ewe than in a wether, and always pale in lambs.

Butchers cut through this bark in various devices, as parallel lines, or crosses, or stars, and many others;

there is also what is called the mackerel-back—a ridge of fat down the middle of the back, an inch or

Sheep—showing full view of mackerel-back.

Sheep—showing full view of mackerel-back.

Sheep—showing full view of mackerel-back.

Sheep—showing side view of mackerel-back.

Sheep—showing side view of mackerel-back.

more wide, with short ridges from it on either side, at right angles, about three inches long.

During this time, as day after day I was prosecuting my inquiries, I was endeavouring to find out, incidentally if possible, whether there was any good reason why cattle should be imported alive at all; and I failed to hear of any, or even to discern any, except this, that when cattle come alive there is what butchers call the offal (the heads, tripe, &c.), which supply to the poor in the neighbourhood of the places (as Birkenhead, Glasgow, &c.) where the cattle are slaughtered much cheap and wholesome food; and there is also to be considered that it gives employment to a good many slaughtermen at those places.

As to the first of these, ways and means would soon be found for bringing even this food over, if not in one form, then in another; so that not an ounce of the so-called offal need be wasted, as we should soon be having large firms, or even companies, buying this food, say at New York, &c., and manufacturing of it wholesome and nutritious food, which would also be very cheap, and could be distributed everywhere without risk of going bad.

The question of employment of slaughtermen would soon adjust itself to new relations.

At length I asked plainly, more than once or twice: 'What are the avowed reasons for bringing cattle over alive?' and was told:—

1st. That if the cattle arrived at a time when prices were depressed at that market, they could be held over; or

2nd. That they could be sent to other markets where better prices could be obtained.

Well, but the dead meat can be held over, too; there exists cold storage by the acre at the docks, where, for a very small charge, meat can be stored as long as the importer wishes.

There is an immense area of cold storage, too, under the Metropolitan Meat Market itself, and many large cold stores around the neighbourhood. One morning, when I was taking an object-lesson with Mr. Wylde, we were obliged to make way for a large lorry on low wheels.[1]

[1] The meat-carriers there, whenever they see a good coat, 'go for it,' and by pushing you aside with a quarter of beef or a carcass of mutton, *before* they say 'by your leave,' generally succeed in marking you well. (My advice to

The lorry was heavily loaded with quarters of beef, and Mr. Wylde said : ' Now, we'll follow this ; it's out of the cold storage.' When we reached the shop or stand of the salesman into which the lorry was wheeled, I asked the salesman, after an interval : ' How long has that meat been in the cold storage ? ' and he answered at once : ' About six months.' ' Is it any the worse for keeping so long ? ' ' No ; it's much about the same. You see, if meat comes over when there's a glut, we put it in the storage, and there let it lie until there comes a time when the supply runs a little short, and then we fetch it out. We don't find any difference in it.'

The fact that cattle can be held over, therefore, does not supply a satisfactory answer to my question, ' Why are cattle imported alive ? '

But they say the live cattle can be sent to other and better markets, as from Birkenhead to Leeds, Rochdale, &c. But can they ? I thought the law

any one going there is to wear a Cardigan jacket under a light overcoat ; the overcoat can be left in the office, and the Cardigan is all right again after the next washing-day. This advice is good, too, if you want to climb down the vertical ladder into a ship's hold.)

prevented that.[1] But as this is only an artificial restriction, which could be removed, I will assume that the restriction does not exist, and that imported cattle can be removed from a market where prices are low to one where prices are higher. What then?

So can the dead meat; there are cold-storage vans now, on all our large railways, for carrying fruit, meat, &c.

This reason also, then, must be dismissed as not affording a satisfactory answer to my question.

I believe that the real and the only answer is one which cannot well be avowed, but which, nevertheless, is *the* only and sufficient answer to the question, 'Why are live cattle imported at all, when their beef can be more cheaply and easily imported, and in better condition?'

It is this: that by sending the animals alive the middlemen (sometimes English, sometimes Ameri-

[1] I find it does: cattle must be slaughtered where they are landed, and that within ten days of landing; and so great is the care taken to avoid importing disease, that even the manure is disinfected with carbolic acid before it is taken away. I noticed in the slaughter-houses at Deptford, also, beef with very yellow fat, and it was attributed by the officer to whom I spoke to the bilious state of the animal arising from the sea-passage.

can), who consign the cattle to salesmen, can add to their legitimate profit a wholly illegitimate one, which belongs by right to the English grazier, by calling it, or stating it to be that which it is not—namely, 'best Scotch,' 'town-killed,' or 'English-fed' beef.

This they could not do if it were imported dead, as by many infallible signs its place of production would be known—shown—evident.

Since writing the above, it occurred to me that all the people I had hitherto interviewed on this subject were those interested in the trade—in fact, highly respectable people. It now occurred to me that, by mingling with the men employed in loading and unloading vans in the Market, and in carrying the meat about from place to place, I might be able to obtain some valuable information. Instead, therefore, of sitting down to my writing one morning, I decided to go to the Market, and presented myself, therefore, at the Market, a little after four o'clock,[1] with an old cap on, and a Cardigan jacket, and got into conversation with these people.

[1] The market opens for supplies at 1 A.M. on Mondays, Fridays, and Saturdays, and at 2 A.M. on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. Each

I found one very intelligent man, who had been about the Market in one capacity or another for more than thirty years, and is now in business as a chopper—*i.e.*, sausage-maker. We went over the Market together, and noted the indications of youth and quality: the redness of the vertebræ, the efflorescent appearance of the fat of the bullocks in the hind quarters, the volume of fat enclosing the kidneys, the livid-looking shank bones of the very fine hind-quarters of American beef (which, by the way, are always cut much longer than the English hind-quarters), and many other interesting matters. He explained to me how that the English butchers, in dividing the vertebræ, leave the dorsal vertebræ one bone on one forequarter and the next bone on the other; whereas the Scotch butchers split all the bones, and do it so neatly that you marvel at their skill.[1] After spending a very considerable time

morning, at 5 A.M., the selling begins. The supply-vans now rapidly disappear, and the butchers' vans from the West End begin to arrive. The West-End butchers always get the pick of the market. The supply-vans may be known by each van being fully loaded with one kind of meat—say sides of beef alone, or carcasses of mutton alone, &c. The butchers' vans are loaded with an assortment of various kinds.

[1] You are only knocked about by quarters of beef before 5 A.M.; only sides or halves are being hurriedly carried about—each side on the shoulders of

with this man, I said to him, remarking upon the different appearance of the various qualities of meat: 'Why do they send cattle over alive, now that meat can be sent over in a refrigerated state?' He replied: 'Oh, it's because they get more money, you know.' I said: 'Indeed! do they?' 'Oh ye—es,' was his response, 'a penny a pound all round, at the least.' Now, a full-grown ox will weigh, when dressed, from 900 lbs. to 1,000 lbs.; so here is a clear difference of 4*l.* per head in favour of the middleman who sends or imports the cattle alive.

I wonder if America, even, ever succeeded in making fools of a whole nation so completely; here we have them or their middlemen sending over their supplies, and coolly getting us to put our trade-

two men—and it is no joke to find yourself in the way of one. I was remarking upon the fine appearance of Deptford-killed American beef which was being carried past. 'Yes,' he said, 'it's splendid beef'; and I said we had had a sirloin of it yesterday, and nothing could be finer. 'Well, about nothing being finer, you know, you try to-day a sirloin of Scotch or Devon (if you know where to get it), and see the difference, to say nothing of the bone being smaller.' I then said that nothing could be juicier; the plate ran with it. 'Yes, that's just it, the juice all runs out, and some is wasted; it doesn't run out of English so much. When you put the beef in your mouth, the juice is in it; and they are alike for tenderness.'

marks upon them, to the great cost of our people (for the penny from the shop-butcher would be at least three halfpence from the householder), and to the still greater injury of the home-producer.

The shipowner? Well, he too suffers, for competition compels the good shipowner to follow the bad lead of the reckless; and I believe they would welcome the prohibition of the importation of live cattle, if so be that they should remain on equal terms with each other. And the volume of freight would remain the same. If it did not come over alive, why, then it would come over dead.

That little affair known as Lord Ashburton's Treaty was a bagatelle to this. Oh! dense John Bull. What a ridiculous position, also, the shipowners are placed in. Here are a few astute middlemen who, having formed the design to victimise the consumer, have succeeded in inducing a few reckless shipowners to fall into their plans; when, forthwith, the whole herd follow suit, and in their mad race for gain turn their ships into floating cattle-pens, and spread death, desolation, and misery broadcast around them.

They would still get the traffic, even if they refused to bring a single bullock over alive.

It appears to me that it is no answer to say that the beef is bred from English stock, and is, therefore, as good as what is reared in England or Scotland—is, in fact, as they say boldly, 'English.'

The question of feeding comes in; and I have not seen in America the fat pastures of Scotland or England, and this may make a difference.

It seems to me, also, that this contention of theirs is on all fours with that of a Nottingham maker of hosiery who should say, 'I use the same materials that are used by the firm of I. & R. Morley, and I make my goods every bit as well and carefully as they do, and I am entitled, therefore, to weave the letter "M" into them.' The reply of Morleys would be: 'Our house has acquired a great reputation for excellence during generations, and if people are willing to pay us more (if you please to put it so) than their value for our goods because they are ours, that is their affair and ours. Our reputation is a far more valuable asset, even pecuniarily, than all our stock-in-trade, and you have no right to come be-

tween us and the public, and, by misleading representations of marks, diminish our legitimate profits; and the law would sustain them in this contention.

This remark will also apply to Horrocks' towelling, which a great number of housekeepers prefer to give more for than for any other towelling. They might get quite as good towelling, perhaps, if they knew where to find it, at a less price; but by buying Horrocks' they know, at least, that nothing better of the kind is made, and they are willing to pay a little extra for the satisfaction of knowing they have got the best. People who have the care of invalids, also, and who are not pinched for means, will give more for Bermuda arrowroot than for arrowroot grown elsewhere, since they know they will get it genuine, and that, although there may be other arrowroot as good, there is certainly none that is better. It may be said that these are fancies. Granted; but a fancy is not to be ignored in matters of this kind, inasmuch as the fancy which the public may form for the goods of a particular firm or company, or the produce of a particular place, becomes a matter of great value to

that firm or place, and ought not to be infringed by unscrupulous outsiders.

Before we dismiss this part of our subject, let us give a little space to the consideration of the

## *ECONOMIC RESULTS*

which would probably ensue if all this beef were landed here as dead meat, and not as live cattle.

The first, and chief result, would be an augmentation and a cheapening of the supply of meat for a very great part of the people; for, these supplies being no longer put upon the market as 'Scotch' and 'English,' would have to be sold as what they are —American, Australian, &c.—and the senders would have to take a lower price. The quality of the meat would remain the same, excepting the improvement resulting from the animal no longer suffering from the effects of the sea voyage; and the quantity would probably be increased, as a ship could take more cattle dead than alive.

Nor would this reduction of price be at the cost of the American grazier or producer of the cattle, and

so tend to a restriction of supply. If the producer received more now for the cattle sent over alive than for that which is slaughtered at New York, Philadelphia, and Boston, the sending over of dead meat would soon cease. It would simply be that the middleman would cease to obtain the illegitimate profit he now gets (by misrepresentation) in addition to the fair profits of his business.

The people, therefore, would benefit, or, at least, those of them who are content with very good instead of 'the best of the best'—those, in fact, who eat to live, as distinguished from those who live to eat.

But, even were this otherwise—were it not only untrue, but the reverse of the truth, I feel sure that no meeting of working-men would hesitate a moment to incur this risk rather than, by avoiding it, to sanction the present cruel and manslaughtering system.

As for the wealthy, the self-indulgent, and even a large section of the well-to-do, they would undoubtedly have to pay an enhanced price for home-fed beef when other supplies were prevented from artificially swelling the genuine supplies of this quality; but then they would certainly get that which

they paid for, which they do not, at present, in many cases, and, even when they do get it, cannot feel sure they have got it, and have an uneasy suspicion that they are cheated, or, at least, humbugged—which mars their enjoyment of it.

The change would add a new luxury to the dinner-table, and I think they would not grudge paying an increased price for it. Consider in how many cases they cheerfully pay a high price, if only they may have 'the best of the best.' Take strawberries.

If they were gathering them in their own gardens, after first securing the best sorts, as 'British Queens,' 'Presidents,' or 'Victorias,' they would eat them without much regard to size; but when they buy them, they must all be of the largest size, and as a result you see those baskets of wonderfully fine fruit which adorn the fruiterers' shop-windows in the West End, which fetches at least a shilling a pound, and sometimes much more.

Nor is this bad for the poor and the economical; for the two-thirds rejected as not fine enough for them are sold at sixpence a pound, and sometimes

for even less. They pay for their fancy, and so they would in the case of meat; and if they are willing to do so, I don't know that anybody would be the worse for it.[1]

I remarked to Mr. Wylde, after he had taught me to distinguish American refrigerated beef from English (I have already stated that it is impossible to distinguish American from English, if the former is killed in England, except by the occasional yellowness of the fat resulting from sea-sickness and

[1] Sometimes, rather curious expedients are adopted by tradesmen to minister to the prejudices of fastidious customers. Welsh mutton, for instance, has acquired a high reputation. Welsh mutton is much smaller than Downs.

Well, they export from Holland and the River Plate (these latter, however, are not available for this purpose, because they are frozen) some very small sheep. Now, these small sheep are poor, and have been poorly fed, and would be rejected by any workhouse in London as being under 50 lbs. weight per carcass; but I know at least one shop in the West End that sells, apparently, nothing but, or at least chiefly, Welsh mutton, the proprietor of which buys these small Dutch animals, smears them with melted suet, and before it (the fat) hardens dredges them over with flour. They are then neatly displayed, and sold as Welsh mutton. Mr. John Randall, of Grimsby, was employed by me, some years ago, in connection with a market which I endeavoured to establish in the neighbourhood of the 'Elephant and Castle'; and he once went to this shop, and said: 'I want a quarter of Welsh mutton.' 'Very well, sir,' said the proprietor, looking up at his display. 'Yes,' said Mr. Randall, 'but I want Welsh mutton.' 'Well, you will get Welsh mutton,' replied the shopkeeper, sharply. 'Yes,' persisted Mr. Randall, 'but I want mutton bred and fed in Wales, not those Dutchmen that come over, that are bought up, and smeared with melted suet, and dredged with flour'; upon which the butcher exploded, in great wrath: 'You had better go on; you know too much for us.'

biliousness; and, also, you never find in foreign cattle the fineness of bone of a Devon or a Scot—they have more timber about them) :—I said: 'But they could, if they pleased, get over English butchers.' 'No, they won't do that; nothing changes so little as customs and habits in trade. We can tell now, every day, from what county English mutton comes.' [1] Upon which, I remembered how, when I lived in Sheffield, the town lost much of its cutlery and tool trade because the workmen simply would not make it different to what they always had, in order to suit a market.

'Call that thing an axe? Well, I don't; so if you want it, you can mak' it yoursen.'

I learnt, also, that for a long time the Germans sent over their dead sheep with a blue seal or garter upon the neck, making its nationality obvious to anybody at a glance; just as in France they stencil a circular blue mark upon each carcass of meat brought through the barriers into the towns, which

[1] By the way or the pattern into which the bark of a sheep is marked by the butcher slashing the bark with his knife; they never vary. But even if they did get over English butchers, I think it would be found that the resources of civilisation had not yet been exhausted.

shows that the octroi dues have been paid. You may see these marks, about three to four inches in diameter, to-day or any day, upon the calves and sheep hanging up in the butchers' shops or at their doors in Paris.

The Germans, it appears, have now ceased to mark their carcasses of mutton in this way; they prefer having it sold as English. It seems to me that, as they themselves put this mark on for a long time to please themselves, there would be no hardship in our placing it upon them in the interests of the British breeder and feeder.

However, farmers are not sailors, so I pass on to consider the conditions under which live cattle are brought over from Transatlantic ports to ports in the United Kingdom.

## *IN RELATION TO SHIPS*

At the outset of this investigation I sought the aid of my brother Henry, in New York, and requested him to employ a photographer in that city to obtain photographs of vessels loading and loaded with

live cattle, and to furnish me with any trustworthy information he might be able to obtain. Mr. Barrat, a friend, and an amateur photographer, assisted him.

In a letter from him, dated 11th March last, he says: 'Fortunately, in the course of my wanderings around to see people I called at the office of the newspaper called *The Press*, and there met a gentleman with whom I had a slight acquaintance—Mr. Berry. We had a long talk, and the result is that he has had instructions to work up the subject (which had not previously been discussed in the papers) for a full-page description, illustrated.' Since that time, I am happy to state that *The Press* newspaper, with the energy that characterises Americans in most of their dealings, has followed the subject up—has employed an artist to illustrate, and a journalist to investigate and write upon it, and the result is a large amount of valuable and very interesting information, upon which I shall make some drafts in the further course of this paper.

As regards the ships engaged in this trade:—

(*a.*) It compels the owners, if they would carry cattle enough to make it pay (for this cargo is bulky

considering the weight), to run frightful risks, and this not occasionally, but on every passage to England.

There is at Cardiff, amongst certain shipowners, a practice which is occasionally commented upon in terms of exceeding and well-deserved severity. They, to save a tide, occasionally send a vessel to sea before the hatches are secured,[1] and whilst some of the coal is still upon deck. This is a very perilous proceeding, as, if it comes on to blow before all is snug, the water may get down the hatchways into the ship. But what is this compared to the peril of taking a fully-loaded steamer, with open hatchways, right *across the Atlantic in winter*? Yet this is what is now regularly done, or attempted, when cattle are carried in the 'tween decks (as is almost always the case). If they close the hatchways in the main deck, to prevent the ship filling with water, the cattle in the 'tween decks are, of necessity, smothered!

[1] The hatchways are the oblong, rectangular openings in the deck through which the cargo is lowered into the ship; the turned-up edges of these are the combings, and the coverings from side to side, which must be very strong, and are, therefore, heavy, are made in several pieces. These are the hatches, and are very strongly secured, and covered with tarpaulin, also strongly secured.

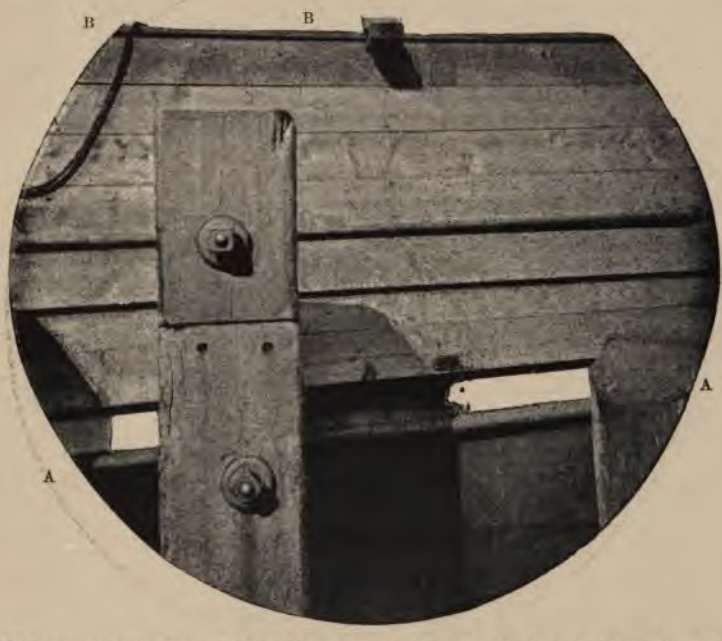
Why! if a captain twenty years ago had been asked to take a loaded ship across the Atlantic with open hatchways, especially in winter, he would have thought the owner mad to ask it, or himself to undertake it.

(*b.*) As to the cattle in the 'tween decks, the floor or deck upon which they stand is below the level of the sea outside, so the urine of the cattle cannot be drained into the sea, and, as it cannot be baled out, is allowed to drain downwards into the bilge, from which it is afterwards pumped into the sea, leaving a stinking sediment of ordure and urine in inaccessible places.

As to the cattle on the main deck, these are best off, as they are well above the water-line, and are protected somewhat by the bulwarks, and the scuppers allow of the escape of the urine, or some of it, into the sea; but being above the main deck and water-line, they diminish the steadiness of the ship, and increase the tendency to roll.

(*c.*) In both these cases the fixing of scantling for pens, &c., cuts the ship about a great deal, and so far is very objectionable. We now come to—

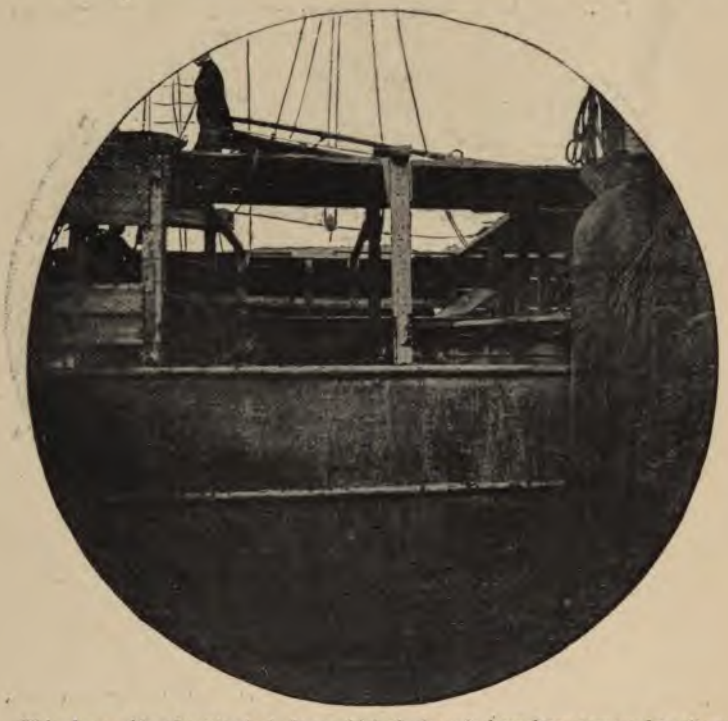
The cattle upon the upper, or spar deck, which exists on some ships. This structure is much weaker than the main deck, as lighter scantling




This shows that portion of the side of the top cattle shed which is above the top of the bulwark, A A. The proper deck of the ship is below the sketch altogether. This photograph was taken to show the thickness (three-quarters of an inch) of all the deck the men have to work upon, B B. There is no pretence of protection for the seamen here.

is used; it is also, of course, much higher out of the water than the main deck, and to load it as it always is in a cattle-laden ship is greatly to

impair the steadiness of the ship, as the centre of gravity is much too high. The vessel thus loaded



This shows side of cattle shed, from which the boards have been removed to allow of the cattle being landed. I should have liked to show the cattle too, but could not obtain permission. What I have got I have gotten how best I could. There is no protection whatever for the seamen here.

rolls heavily, and through a much wider arc. Nor is this all, or the worst. The spar deck, or the main deck when no spar deck exists, is the place

from and upon which the sailors work or handle the ship. Inside the bulwarks, fife-rails (horizontal

This photograph I took to show the makeshift fife-rail and belaying pins which are necessary when a ship is loaded with live cattle (when she carries her load upon her back instead of inside); the horizontal bar of wood near the man's hand is the fife-rail. It has holes up and down, into which the belaying pins are dropped; they are prevented from dropping through by a collar or flange. The ropes (called sheets and stays) to be secured are passed behind the ends of the belaying pins (first bottom, then top) a few times.

The proper fife-rails fixed by the builder of the ship (of which I had a photograph, but have lost it and can't wait) are inside and below the top of the bulwarks, A A. The makeshift is nearly half-way up the mast. This photograph also shows the thinness of the working deck—$\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch. It also shows the side of the cattle pens above the bulwarks. These are always more or less damaged on arrival.

bars of wood) are securely fixed on each side, and opposite to each mast, four to five feet long; through this (the fife-rail) are vertical holes, into

This also shows openings made on arrival in order to land the cattle. It also shows makeshift fife-rail, belaying pins, &c.

which pins of hardwood, about eighteen to twenty inches long, are dropped, until a collar or flange stops them, leaving equal lengths of the pin above

and below the fife-rail, or horizontal bar. These are the belaying pins, and are used to make fast the ropes (called stays and sheets) which hold the

Another view.

sails in their position to take the wind at the angle desired.

Now, when it is determined that this upper, or

spar deck, shall be made into an exceedingly crowded cowhouse from end to end, it is no longer available

Shows end of shedding and boats' davit; the latter rendered useless until removal of shedding. Showing also the thinness (¾ inch) of the roofing, which is also the working deck.

to the crew to work the ship from. The fife-rails, for instance, are entirely inaccessible, for they are inside the cowhouses, and a temporary one has to be

fixed to the standing rigging, high enough up to be above the roof of the cowhouse. The sides of the cowhouses, all along the sides of the ship, from the top of the bulwarks upwards, are only made of

This shows the end of the cattle sheds. The ends near where the man stands are left open during the voyage for ventilation. The edge of the deck planking, or rather boards, is also shown ; also the top of the davit over the man's head. The boats are rendered useless where these deck structures exist. The sides are the same thickness (¾ of an inch) as the top.

three-quarter inch boards ; and the roof over them, extending from one side to the other, and from end to end, is also constructed of three-quarter inch floor-boarding, supplemented here and there, where

the men haul upon the ropes, by a second board laid upon it.

This is now the only deck available to the sea-

This also shows openings in side of cattle shed through which the cattle have been landed ; also thickness, or rather thinness, of working deck (¾ inch).

men, instead of the solid and firm deck below ; and instead of the bulwarks, to keep them from being washed overboard, there is a rope stretched from

the top of one piece of upright scantling, three inches square, to a similar upright farther on.

The whole structure, being three-quarter inch

Photograph of cattle ship with the midship portion of the cattle sheds not yet taken to pieces, near to the top of the funnel.

stuff, is very frail, and not infrequently is washed clean overboard with all the cattle—and if there be any men on deck at the time, with them also. And it is well that it should be so; for, if these structures

they could not possibly have been lowered into the water before or until the roof and the side of the top cowhouse had been pulled down—an exceedingly

General view of shedding on top deck. The shedding is continued behind the ladder, which shows black, A.

hard thing to do in the only circumstances in which it would be needful to try to do it.

I will conclude the consideration of this part of

my subject by quoting a remark which appeared in the newspaper called *The Press*, of New York, on the 24th of March last. Speaking of the effects of

Photograph of two cattle ships with portions of the over-deck cattle sheds still unremoved.

this traffic on the ships, it reads as follows :—'It is said that the effect upon the ship itself is detrimental in the extreme : the hull becomes strained, the seams

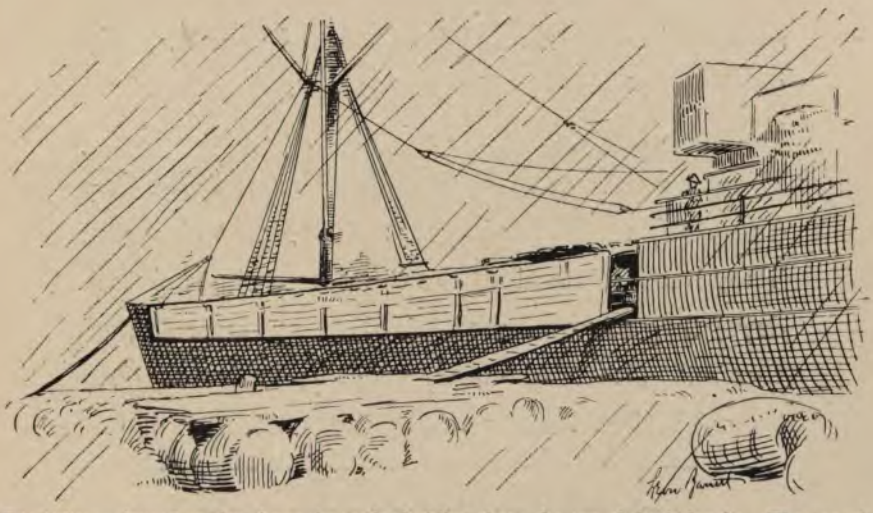
open, and after two or three voyages under deck-loads, even iron steamers have to go into the dock to be overhauled.'

You can only see the open end of the shedding here.

Now, the question arises, Why do shipowners consent to make such a mess of their ships, and cut them about so ?

It arose in this way : the middlemen—some

English, some Americans—found they could get the English farmer's profit as well as their own by sending the cattle over alive, and so chartered, first one vessel, and then another, and seldom found much



The lighter coloured portion shows the cattle shedding above the top of the bulwarks. The top of the shed is within 3 or 4 inches of being level with the bridge or the officer's look-out. The officer is now on the bridge or look-out. This was taken in New York—*i.e.* the photograph from which this is sketched.

difficulty in getting a vessel, especially when freights were slack; and then the better shipowners were fain to accept an offer; so one shipowner did it after another, because other freight was scarce, and if he didn't, another would.

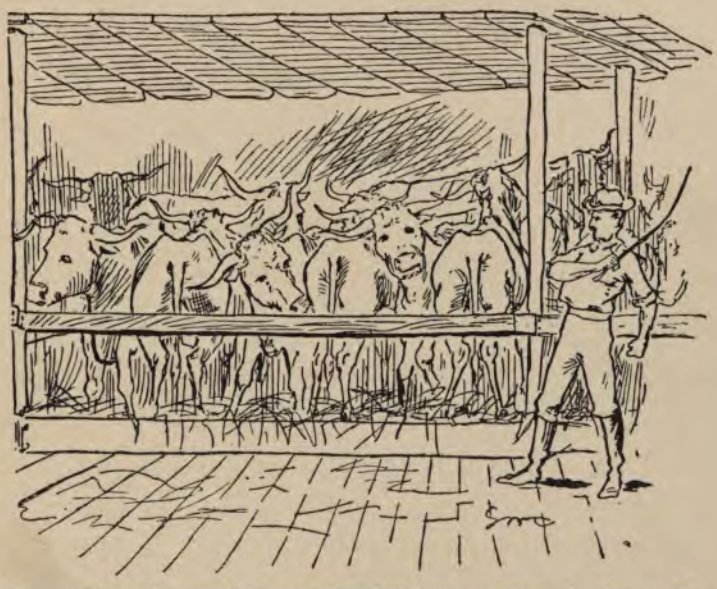
## *IN RELATION TO THE ANIMALS*

WE will now consider this traffic in relation to the animals. *The Press* of New York of March 24 last says: 'The cattle are tightly jammed together, only two feet six inches, and in some instances two feet three inches[1] [many contracts read only two feet.—S. P.] being allowed for each ox or bullock; and that they (the oxen) are mad and furious with terror and unrest. They have to stand all the time (sometimes sixteen days) they are on board. This alone is prolonged torture.' (Let any one try standing for twenty-four hours.)[2] Besides describing the sufferings of the

[1] I have only heard of one shipowner who gives the poor cattle room enough to lie down—C. Wilson, M.P. for Hull. It is clear that he must work at an enormous pecuniary disadvantage with his less scrupulous competitors.

[2] I remember once, during the war in the Crimea, reading how our soldiers had to lie upon the ground, having no tents or bedding; and, thinking to bring my sympathies into touch with them, I, too, would sleep on the ground. Well, the first two hours (after going late to bed) I didn't sleep at all, and then was only half-asleep for the rest of the night. I remember how glad I was when the light came, and one could get up, and wash and brush up, and experiencing that comical scorn which an occasional early riser feels for the people who idle away their time in bed, and waste such beautiful bright sunshine. Well, I had had enough of it, and was chiefly sure of one thing in relation to this style of sleeping—that was, that it was conducive in a high degree to early rising.

animals, the commissioner employed by *The Press* newspaper in New York to investigate this subject gives instances where considerable numbers of cattle



View of the cattle penned together (sketched from a photograph taken in New York). More cattle can be got into a pen by putting them one heading this way, the next heading the other; but if a bullock falls asleep or is ill, and lies down it gets up no more. It only lies down to die.

have been lost from the steamers. For example, he speaks of the case of the steamer 'Iowa.' She sailed from New York, 'early in the present winter, with 150 head of cattle on deck. Off the Banks she

encountered heavy weather. For two days she rolled and pitched, during which time her deck-load of living, suffering beasts was thrown from side to side, goring each other with their horns. Scores of them were trampled underfoot, until finally a mighty wave struck the vessel, and the entire deck-structure was washed away, and with it the 150 cattle. The shifting of the deck-load caused the vessel to careen badly. In her hold, upon temporary platforms built up on each side, were 300 other cattle. In their struggles the staging was thrown down, and the 300 beasts were hurled to the bottom of the hold. For a while Pandemonium reigned, and the tortured creatures bellowed and struggled, trampling and goring each others' lives out, until the surviving ones sank exhausted. The vessel then lay almost on her beam ends. Fortunately the wind had subsided. She was righted after her hatchways had been opened and all that mass of dead and dying cattle thrown overboard ; but her escape was deemed little short of miraculous.'

Further on the commissioner says: 'More thrilling still is the loss of the British steamer " San-

I have been on ships many times which have rolled to a much greater degree than is here shown by a ship's captain who is also an artist ; he lives in Liverpool.

tiago," some time last fall. Besides the usual deck-load of cattle, she carried several passengers, among them a young wife and her infant. The vessel was burned at sea, and most of the poor brutes were slowly roasted in their stalls. When it became evident that the vessel was doomed, the boats were cleared away, and passengers and crew abandoned the burning craft. But here a new danger beset them. The sea all about the ship was filled with bullocks—part of the deck-load which had jumped overboard to escape the flames. These swam for the boats, and were with difficulty beaten off with hatchets and oars. As it was, the little craft, with their freight of human lives, barely escaped being swamped by the fear-crazed animals. They got safely off, however, and were subsequently picked up by another vessel and brought to this port.'

Referring to the loading of a cattle-steamer, the commissioner says: 'That part of the ship known to the mariner as "'tween decks" was fitted up quite comfortably with stalls and pens, each capable of accommodating from six to ten bullocks. Barring the fact that, in rough weather, with the hatches battened

down, the place would soon become worse than the famous "Black Hole of Calcutta," it looked as though the beasts might be made quite comfortable. But it was the deck-load that aroused the special interest of the two *Press* men. The entire deck of the "Nevarro" (the vessel then under description) resembled at first glance an immense lumber-shed. It was roofed over from stem to stern, and built up on the sides, above the rail, until a complete but rather frail-looking structure had been added to her original lines, altering them completely above the water-mark. Underneath this roof, and running with the ship's length, were three rows of stalls or pens, similar to those in cattle-yards, each one having a capacity of eight head. These rows were built, one on each side, and one directly through the centre of the ship. There was a narrow aisle, not over three feet wide, between each row.

'The pens were all full of cattle when the deck-load was on. Overhead were piled dozens of bales of hay, adding materially to the height of the superstructure and its resistance to the wind. The artist got two or three good snapshots with his camera,

which show just how the "Nevarro" looked as she was ready for sea, and the condition her deck was in when she did actually go to sea the next morning.

'Imagine, if you can, the difficulties to be overcome in handling a vessel so incumbered in a gale, with the seas breaking over her. The reporter asked one of the sailors what the crew did in such a case. The sailor didn't know. He had never been to sea in such a ship before, and was only going this time because he wanted to get to his family in Liverpool, and could not get passage on any other ship. He said that ships like the "Nevarro" never had the same crew twice, the hardships of one voyage usually being enough for them. The crews were always made up, the sailor said, of men who wanted to get back to England, but had no money, and were willing to take big chances in order to reach home.'

Speaking of the close packing of the cattle, the commissioner explains that he 'asked the mate how the cattle stood up when the ship rolled. "We put them in close enough to hold each other up," was the reply. Further inquiry in another direction

developed the fact that they did not always stand up, but if one fell, or lay down, it was very bad for it: water was thrown on it, its tail was twisted, pitchforks were jabbed into it, and other equally cruel measures resorted to in the hope that the pain would make the beast rise, as otherwise it would surely be trampled to death by the restless hoofs of its companions. . . . The shipper goes in to make all he can, and takes his chances of not losing enough cattle to counterbalance what he saves on insurance and in freight by overcrowding a chartered vessel. In such cases the cruelties practised are sometimes beyond description.'

On March 25, 1890, *The Press* returned to the subject, which had then become a topic of public conversation, and gave some of the opinions expressed upon their article. 'Your paper is on the right tack,' said one gentleman to *The Press* reporter, 'and you have taken up the cudgels in a good cause.'

'You will find a lot of opposition from shippers and owners who make money out of it, but I dare say there is not a poor devil of a seaman who has been before the mast on one of these floating hells

that will not bid you God speed in your work from the bottom of his heart.'

'How many, many times do you see in the marine reports accounts in the logs of captains of how John Smith, or Tom Brown, or Bill Jones was washed overboard with part of a deck-load, and lost. They do not get into the papers very often; for of what account, after all, is one poor devil of a sailor more or less to this big, busy, rushing, scrambling world of ours? Unless your efforts to wake them up are successful, the great unthinking public will never realise how important a matter this really is until the "Servia," or the "Teutonic," or "La Champagne," or some other great Atlantic liner, runs a-foul of one of these deck-laden cattle-yards, and goes to the bottom like a shot, with 1,000 people on board.

'Then they will wonder why some one did not think to have a law passed keeping unmanageable vessels off the high seas. I tell you, these vessels with cattle-laden decks are just as much derelicts in a gale as though there was no one on board of them.'

'"The account of the evils resulting from over-crowding vessels with cattle, as published in yester-

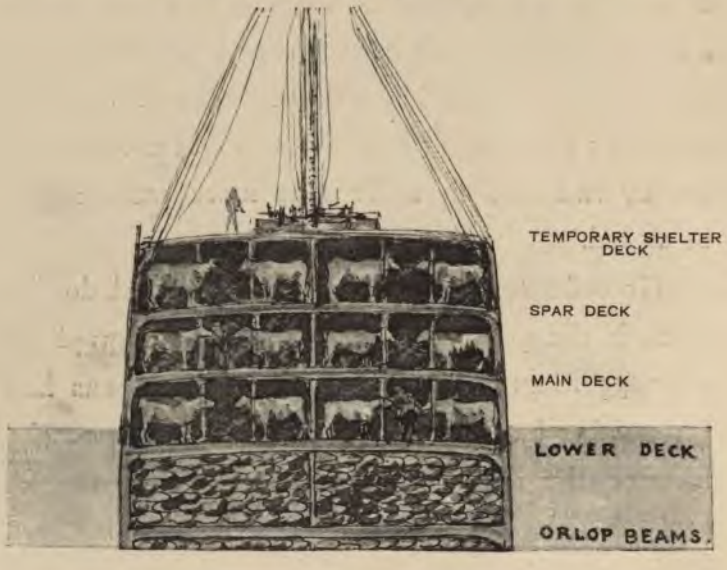
day's *Press*, was every word true," said Superintendent Charles H. Hankinson, of New York, to a *Press* reporter.'

On March 31 last *The Press* recorded the departure from New York of the 'Runic,' with 757 head of cattle on board, 'packed together like sardines in a box'; upon which he remarked: 'The law requires that each animal shall be allowed a space of eight by two feet; but in most instances this was cut down to six by two feet, in order that more cattle might be stored.'

(In order to make the two feet of breadth do, the cattle in the pens are shown by the photograph on page 55 to present to each side of the pens half the number heads, the other half rumps, alternately, so that the horns of two cattle looking towards you have the hinder parts of a bullock between them.—S. P.)

By April 3 the commotion made by the *exposé* in *The Press* had begun to have some good effect, which that paper referred to on that date, concluding its notice in these words:—'When the cattle were at length secured in the pens' (of the 'Bernescia'), 'which

were commodious, and better secured than usual, and the boards nailed down, the officer remarked, that he would not like to say that in a storm the whole live cargo would not perish. The abatement of this abuse has just begun, and much remains to be




accomplished. It is the opinion of many well-informed men that the total abolition of deck-loading is necessary.'

*The Press*, on April 10, published another article, on 'The Horrors of a Cattle-ship,' and gave an illus-

tration of how 600 head of cattle were packed on the decks of the 'Persian Monarch.' *The Press* remarked :—'One of the men told the reporter that the sufferings of the brutes during a voyage were horrible to behold. A sea-sick man, he said, is one of the most pitiful things one can see, but his sufferings are nothing to those of a dumb brute. They will look at one so pleadingly and helplessly that you almost feel like crying for them. You have no idea how they are knocked about when a wave strikes the ship. Between overcrowding, the storms, and our sticks, the poor beasts have a hard time enough.'

In an article called 'Live Stock on the Rack,' a New York paper takes up the cause of the suffering cattle in relation to the loss of the 'Erin.' It remarks that :—'The loss of the steamer "Erin," of the National Line, ought to have been sufficient to start an investigation. That vessel sailed from this port on December 28, and is now supposed to be at the bottom of the sea. . . . It is highly probable that she went down in a storm. The Atlantic was extremely boisterous about that time, and the "Erin's" decks were so incumbered with cattle as to render

her unmanageable in a heavy sea. On her main deck she carried 275, on her upper deck 252, making 527 in all. This certainly made her topheavy. With such a cargo so far above the water-line, she could not rally from the shock of fast-succeeding waves. . . . The insurance company insisted that the "Erin" should not attempt to carry so many cattle. Its inspectors placed the limit at 475. While entirely willing that 275 should be carried on the main deck, they did not consider it safe that the number on the upper deck should exceed 200. The shipper—who in this case proved to be Meyer Goldsmith, the largest exporter of live-stock in the United States—was informed that, if he did not load the vessel to her full capacity—527 head, according to the company's agents—he would be required to pay "dead freight." In other words, if Mr. Goldsmith accepted the insurance company's estimate of 475 head, and shipped only that number, he would be charged with the freight of the entire 527; which meant that he would be forced to pay the National Line over 1,100 dollars for carrying fifty-two head of cattle which it did not carry. Mr. Goldsmith

refused to ship the cattle uninsured. The insurance company refused to take a risk of more than 475 [but, unfortunately, appear to have taken for granted that no more would be sent; they should have made this point a stipulation in their policy.—S. P.]. The issue, thus plainly defined, threatened to cause trouble; but a compromise was finally effected by the steamship company itself agreeing to take the risk on the fifty-two head.'

. . . . . .

'But to go back a few months. At the beginning of winter the steamer "England,"[1] which could not possibly make more than 600 cattle comfortable on her decks, sailed from New York with a cargo of 1,000. Fortune favoured her. She encountered beautiful weather, and lost but eight head. The "Queen,"[2] whose capacity is 450, carried 800, of which ninety died. The "Spain,"[3] with accommodation for only 575, took 1,000, losing 150.'

[1] This ship belongs to the National Steamship Company, who owned the 'Erin.'

[2] This ship also belongs to the National Steamship Company.

[3] This ship also belongs to the National Steamship Company. Hear what Mr. Laing, a *shipowner* of Leith, says of shipowners. Speaking at a meeting of the Scottish Shipmasters' Association, he said, 'that the chairman

Again :—'The arrangements for stowing a cargo of cattle are usually of the cheapest, flimsiest, and most temporary description. The suffering inflicted on the wretched brutes is horrible. In winter they freeze on the upper deck; in summer they swelter in the hold, and perish for want of air. . . . Not all the companies are culpable. A few—precious few!—have some heart, but the majority are governed entirely by the greed of gain. . . . Of 1,000 cattle packed like sardines (heads and rumps alternately), 200 died. What matters it? No loss to the company. The insurance people must look to that. . . . .

'But there is another side to this question of space-allowance. When business is brisk, and vessels are scarce, you will find five cattle, nay, even six, packed in a stall made for four. There is no danger of their not supporting each other then. During the entire voyage, in good weather and in bad, they literally hold each other up. What torture! . . . .

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did not see the vessels going to sea out of Shields laden down to the gunwale. Instead of going across the Atlantic, he would not go to London in them. Neither the lives of those on board, nor the thought of desolate homes affected the cupidity of such owners.'

A bullock once down on his side in one of these prison-ships is down for good. He gets down to die.'

And then, adverting to the sailors, the commissioner remarks:—'The wretched sailors on board the average cattle-steamer suffer but little less than the brutes that incumber the decks, and on many vessels it is impossible to persuade the same crew to ship a second time. A tramp steamer in the business is a hell upon water. Not only does overloading endanger the ship by making her top-heavy and unmanageable, but it so blocks and obstructs the deck that the crew are unable to attend properly to their duties. So greedy are the agents, in their desire to increase the carrying capacity of their vessels, that they have been known to raise the lifeboats high above the deck, and build stables beneath them.' [I have seen that repeatedly myself.—S. P.] 'In such a case, what would become of the crew if it should be necessary to abandon the ship hurriedly?

'It is said that the captains are opposed to these risks, but that the companies keep them in subjec-

tion with threats of instant dismissal if they refuse to obey orders. Common sailors can say nothing. Theirs is a dog's lot. Once signed, they are at the mercy of their employer.'

It is of no use saying that these are mere newspaper extracts. My brother, Henry Plimsoll, who was assisting me in New York, himself brought the matter to the notice of Mr. Berry, a journalist of that city. Mr. Berry took the matter up, and laid it before the managers of the *Press*—a New York paper—and by them was appointed their commissioner to investigate and report upon the whole subject. He has conducted his investigations with the energy which is not unusual in America—had photographs taken and illustrations prepared, boarded vessels, interviewed people that were acquainted with the facts, and seen for himself—and the extracts I give are extracts from the reports which he has made from time to time to this newspaper. They are, therefore, quite as authentic as the contents of the report of a Royal Commission would be.

I will now give extracts from a couple of English

newspapers, the editors of which will, no doubt, be able to vindicate themselves if the accuracy of the statements made therein is impugned. The first is from the *Liverpool Mercury*, under date January 28 last, and is as follows :—

'On board a steamer which entered the Mersey last week from a Virginian port, fifty beasts were killed during a hurricane which lasted four days. The manner in which these unfortunate animals met their death is shocking to contemplate. Their bulky bodies, washing to and fro, were dashed against each other, their horns goring whatever they came in contact with, until they became masses of bruised and quivering flesh, from which the life at last departed when agony and exhaustion had done their cruel work. Among the survivors were many with broken legs and other dreadful injuries; while during the four days of storm they had remained untended and unfed, save for masses of hay flung among them from the upper deck. Such has been the experience of one vessel; and it can hardly be doubted but that similar scenes have occurred on others.'

The following particulars are selected from a letter to the editor of the *Echo*, published on November 6 and 8, 1889, the writer of which will, no doubt, be known to the editor :—

'The sights that were witnessed on that first Sunday at sea, and the sounds of the moaning of the poor beasts, were so shocking as to sicken the majority of the passengers. All Sunday the cattle-men were busy keeping the cattle awake, and guarding them against any lying down or going to sleep. Those that showed any indications of weakness or exhaustion were cruelly goaded with sharp-pointed bludgeons. They were beaten on the sides and heads, cold water was dashed in their faces ; this failing, they were mercilessly thumped on the head with heavy, iron-bound buckets. The cords by which they were made fast to the stalls were drawn tighter, so that it was impossible for them to kneel, as cattle do when in the act of lying down, without inflicting upon themselves such excruciating torture that they were forced to keep on their feet. To further compel them to remain awake, the cattle-men kept moving along their stalls, striking the wooden

sides with clubs, and continually shouting, and beating on the head those that showed no signs of awakening.

'All night long the cattle-men were up, going from stall to stall, on deck as in the hold, with flashing dark lanterns. One poor ox, as the ship gave a sudden lurch to starboard, was knocked senseless in its pen; both forelegs were broken at the knees, one horn was torn from its socket, and it received other injuries. To save those nearest to it, the cattle-men dragged it out, and left it helpless and suffering on deck. For thirty hours it lay there, until it died from exhaustion.

'From this time out began the awful sufferings of the animals. That most agonising disease known among cattle-men as red water on the following Thursday made its appearance, and not a day went by, even after the ship had passed the Isle of Wight, that from one to four head of cattle did not die, and have to be thrown overboard; while many more were landed at Deptford in a dying state. . . .

As the disease is infectious, and spreads rapidly,

all the sufferers by it are heroically treated. Some I saw were so weak that they could hardly stand. Some of the men in charge, who are paid a percentage on the number of cattle they bring alive into Deptford, tortured the animals most fiendishly into a semblance of animation. Their cruelty called forth a cry of horror from many of the passengers who witnessed it, and they subsequently held an indignation meeting.

'On several occasions I saw the men pour paraffin oil into their ears, which, as soon as it reached the brain, caused the poor brutes to fairly shriek with pain. Occasionally the ears were stuffed with hay, which was then fired; while in many instances the tails were snapped in the endeavours of the cattle-men to force the animals that had lain down from sheer exhaustion to regain their feet. The commander of the vessel was appealed to, in the hope that he would order a cessation of these cruel practices.

'"I am well aware," he said, "of the cruelties practised on cattle in transport from New York to London, and I will say at once that you see less of

it on this line of steamers than on many of the other ships, for a very simple reason, that our steamers are better adapted for the business. I am, however, powerless to interfere in the matter. My duties are simply to carry out the instructions of my employers, the cattle being regarded by me as but freight, nothing else. The reason that these animals, no matter how horribly mutilated, sick, or suffering, are not put out of their misery, is to be found in the imperative rules of the insurance companies, both in New York and London. They have made it compulsory, under pain of forfeiture of insurance, that no cattle shall be killed, no matter how maimed, injured, or suffering. The cattle must die a so-called natural death on board ship, and I must sign a certificate to that effect before the carcass can be thrown overboard. It is stipulated by the insurance companies that every effort shall be made to land every head of cattle alive at Deptford, no matter what their condition ; for, failing this, the company will refuse to pay the insurance. Should the man in charge kill an animal suffering intense agonies from broken legs, back,

horns, or sickness, it would be my duty to report the case, and the insurance would not be paid. It used to be the practice, up to two years ago, to have butchers on cattle-ships to skin the dead animals before throwing them overboard. The skins and horns were brought ashore as evidence. The ship-owners, however, entered such a remonstrance on the subject, owing to the complaints of passengers, and the horrible condition in which the ships naturally were left, that this has now been stopped. A still more important matter for consideration is that we should not have to land at Deptford so many animals suffering or tainted from the disease, which is infectious to a high degree."

'In winter, when the voyages are generally accompanied by storms, the trips are longer, and the hatches battened down. Then is the time to witness the terrible sufferings of the animals, which are fairly tortured into frenzy, and die by wholesale; while their carcasses often become rotten before it is possible to open the hatches and throw the bodies overboard.

To show how inexorable are the insurance

laws on the subject, last winter the captain of a cattle-ship was caught in a hurricane. All the cattle-pens were blown overboard at once, and the animals, let loose on deck, were thrown violently from side to side, until they lay writhing, with broken legs, backs, or horns.[1] The ship was in immediate danger of sinking, so the captain ordered the animals to be thrown overboard. Many were dead, but neither the captain nor the head cattle-man could swear that all were dead. The companies, therefore, refused to pay the insurance. The exporters sued the shipping company, and, the court deciding against the latter, they were mulcted out of six thousand pounds.

'The man who had charge of the cattle on board the vessel I came by, admitted, gruffly, that he had to torture the animals in the way he did :—"He was obeying the orders of his employers, the exporters, to use every known device to land his cattle alive at Deptford." "They would die like sheep," he

[1] When once the cattle get adrift, the attendants cannot go amongst them so as to give them water: it would cost them their lives, or at least terrible injuries; therefore they never now attempt it. —S. P.

gruffly remarked, "if they were not roughly handled."

. . . . . .

'When the cattle were finally landed at Deptford, many were so weak that they staggered about, and fell down helplessly. These the butchers quickly killed. A ship which left America on September 7, with 360 head of cattle, was caught in a cyclone when three days out. She arrived Friday, the 27th, with only fourteen (!) head of live cattle; the remainder had died during the fearfully stormy passage. The captain's report of the scenes of the sufferings of the cattle on board this ship is too horrible to publish.'

I may state here, that the information I have received from many witnesses orally, during the last three months, is entirely of the same character, and that I can produce some of the witnesses.

One witness, George Pirrett, says that on one ship in which he sailed the firemen had all to help to get eighty dead cattle overboard after a gale; their bodies were in the 'tween decks—*i.e.* below the main deck—and they had been smothered by the closing

of the hatchways. He says that they were lying dead, one upon another, up to the ceiling—*i.e.*, the underside of the main deck, just where the last great lurch or 'send' of the ship had thrown them.

On another ship they had had, after a gale had blown itself out, to heave overboard over 200 cattle; that when the hatches were taken off, and the men went below, the heat was so great and the stench so bad that they could only remain below a quarter of an hour, and had to work with nothing on but their trousers and shoes; that frequently, when they had led the tackle from the hatchway, and had put the rope around the neck of a dead bullock, by the time this was done some of the live cattle had got foul of the tackle—that is, stood over it. No matter; the donkey-engine was going, the winch too, and the dead bullock was pulled through the legs of the living ones, throwing them down—some of them too weak to rise again.

These two ships belonged to one company.

In the next annual report they issued, this is what they say of all these horrors:—

'The directors have again pleasure in referring to improvement in the earnings of the steamers,

principally derived from a continuance, during the greater part of the past year, of remunerative homeward freights for produce and cattle.'

What does it matter that cattle should be tortured —legs broken, horns torn off, frightful wounds from goring, from which trail through urine and ordure the animals' intestines? What matters all this, so long as there is an 'improvement in the earnings of the steamers'?

The freight for the cattle is safe all the same. What would you have?

A trusty friend in Bristol informs me that, out of 276 cattle shipped on the steamship 'Oxford,' in Baltimore, they only landed sixteen alive!

Another from Glasgow, after commenting severely on the hardships to, and the sufferings of, the men, gives me a list of losses of cattle on the passage of ships to their port, commencing October 18, 1889. There are five hundred and seventy-eight (578). What waste, as well as what cruelty!

Another from West Hartlepool speaks of the 'City of Baltimore,' which shipped 680 cattle, and only landed thirty-three!

Mr. Howard Vincent has moved for a Return of these and other losses, for which he deserves the thanks of the seamen ; but there is enough, and more than enough, in what is common knowledge at our ports, to justify and to demand immediate legislation.

But neither are cattle, seamen ; so I will pass on to consider this subject in

## *ITS RELATION TO SAILORS*

and their poor wives and their little children.

I will endeavour to raise but a corner of the screen of obscurity which swallows up as fast as they occur all the details of the cases of missing ships—cases which receive so little notice, that I have seen the loss of three steamers, containing eighteen, and sixteen, and twenty precious human lives, recorded in the *Daily News* in a paragraph only seven-eighths of an inch long, and of which there was no notice whatever in the other daily papers. This was the only notice which I saw.

I and my wife had gone down to the Tidal Basin,

in the far East of London, to meet the female relations of a few of the men who were on board the 'Erin' (who lived in London) when she sailed on her last voyage from New York.

We met in the little vestry of the Congregational Chapel close to the station at Tidal Basin. There were ten widows, or, rather, women who knew not yet for certain whether they were wives or widows. It was in February, and very cold. The room (about nine feet by twelve) contained a large, oblong table and ten chairs. It was lighted by one jet of gas; there were but two possible lights. I sat at the end of the table, opposite the door. The fireplace, without fire, was behind me, in the corner opposite the door, and the window was between them.

My wife sat at my left, with the empty fireplace behind her. Next her sat a young woman (Mrs. Wheeler), about three-and-twenty; she was a pretty young woman. 'Look at her,' said the woman next her (her aunt)—'only married five months, and now a widow!' The poor young woman turned aside her head to conceal her tears. Farther down sat a woman who had lost her husband; she had four children,

with only her to look to. Farther on, next the door, sat a young woman (Mrs. Smith) who had lost her husband and father ; she was too poor to wear black (which most of them by this time had assumed), and sat in a dress of printed calico ; she had two little children (Keziah, nine years ; and Harriet, two years and three months), and she was expecting a third in another month. Again, farther in a corner, was a poor woman sobbing aloud ; she had lost her husband and her son. And, coming round nearer to my chair, was an elderly woman who had lost her husband ; she gave the greatest attention to all the proceedings, and, so far as I saw, moved no muscle from first to last, but manifested no other sign of feeling. It was a pitiful and most moving sight ; and these repre sented the relatives of only one-seventh of the drowned men (the crew and cattle-men on board numbered seventy-four).

I told the poor sorrowing women that it was no idle feeling of curiosity which had brought us down to meet them, but heartfelt sympathy with them in their doubly-distressing bereavement—distressing to their feelings, and distressing also in view of the

poverty and destitution in which they and their children were for the future to pass their lives. It would be a cruel kindness in me were I to bid them hope, for there was no hope of seeing their husbands and sons alive again; that it was too soon, whilst the pain of recent bereavement was so keen, to offer to them, as any consolation, the thought that their sorrow might, possibly, in some degree bring nearer the time when the public would take thought for our seamen; but that at some time in the future, when the keenness of their grief had been somewhat softened by the lapse of time, if not consolation, they might yet find some alleviation of their grief in the thought that their sorrow had been the bitter root from which had sprung into life the vigorous plant and the fair flower of safety and of happiness to hundreds of other poor women, whose husbands were exposed to perils like those in which their husbands had perished a few weeks ago. These latter women, who are still wives, spend their lives in dreadful apprehension, knowing the wholly needless dangers to which their husbands are exposed.

The poor women, who we thought looked some-

what impassive when we entered (they cannot be always crying), were now, some crying softly, and some sobbing audibly, and were eager to tell us how one had four, another two, and yet another three children; and whatever were they to do? It was more than two months now since their husbands had left home; there were wages due, and they had all been to the National Company's offices, in Leadenhall Street, to ask if the Company would pay them a few shillings each on account of what was due to their husbands; and how that they were roughly spoken to (they were unanimous on this point), told that they could have nothing before the vessel was posted as 'Missing,' when the balance of wages due would be paid into the Board of Trade; that they had no business to come there (Leadenhall Street) in a crowd (there were eleven); that they should meet, and appoint one woman, and send her to represent them all—so many coming together caused talking, &c.

This, and more to the like effect. But in the general complaint of harsh treatment there was a notable exception. 'All but the cashier, sir; he was

kind, and said he was very sorry for us.' What was his name? 'Euston, sir—Mr. Euston; he was troubled for us; the rest were angry with us for coming to the office.'

'Did they pay you anything on account?' 'No, sir; they said they couldn't, and told us to go away.' 'Even if they'd only given us our railway-fare it would have helped a bit,' said one poor woman (she in the print dress), who my wife found had not bread to give her two little children, and who had stripped her bed (so had Mrs. Twyman for her husband), when her husband sailed, to provide for him the bedding needed on board.

She had occasion a day or two ago (May 21) to see my wife in Park Lane, and brought her children (nine years, and two and a quarter years, together with the month-old baby she was expecting when at the meeting). Poor little things! Harriet, the two-year-old, was rather shy at first, but soon smiled, and came to me, and remained some time with great content—poor little fatherless baby! This poor woman had received 2*l.* 10*s.* as wages due to her husband; they don't pay wages even up to the day

the vessel was due, but only to the day she was last seen (December 31), although the Company were at pains to prove that the vessel was lost in the gale of the 6th, 7th, and 8th January. She said her husband always worked overtime to earn more money (he was a fireman); but she could prove nothing, and so received nothing. We also raised her a few pounds, in common with the other widows, by a benefit at a concert-hall, and she is now living on these sums. I asked her what she would do when the money was done, and she said, 'she really did not know.' What can she do, poor creature! with three such young children about her feet? It is cruel, cruel work.

Many of these women and their children would have suffered the pangs of hunger; they had nothing left to sell, and had an almost invincible repugnance to parish aid. The National Line Company, which had drowned their husbands, never dreamed of giving them the least assistance. But George Pirrett, the local secretary to the Seamen's Union (and I mention it to his honour), gave each of them a few shillings a week out of his own savings, in the hope

that the Executive of the Union would reimburse him when they held their next meeting. In this way he distributed some fourteen pounds! which I

George Pirrett. The good Samaritan of these poor people.

am glad to add was reimbursed to him some time afterwards by the Union.[1]

[1] It is singular how fearfully parsimonious shipowners are when calamity overtakes their servants. A colliery-owner will, though well-nigh ruined by an explosion, give sometimes 500*l.*, sometimes 200*l.*, to help the widows. The colliery-owner too, unlike the shipowner, can't insure his property.

An English ship was loading timber some time ago in a foreign port, and putting on a heavy deck-load contrary to the law. So high and heavy was the

Mrs. Wright: 2 children, lost husband.

Mrs. Euaston: 4 children, lost son, her only support.

Mrs. Buchan: 4 children, lost husband.

Mrs. Smith: 3 children, lost husband.

Mrs. Collins: lost son, only support.

Mrs. Facey: 3 children, lost husband.

Mrs. Kilyenton: 2 children, lost husband.

Mrs. Wilkinson: one adopted child, lost husband.

Mrs. Twyman: 2 children, lost husband and son.

, This small group shows only one-seventh of the female relatives of the men lost in only one missing steamship, the 'Erin' (there are scores of ships so lost every year)—nine poor women and twenty-one fatherless children.

Mrs. Buchan: lost husband, she is left with 4 children.
Mrs. Facey: lost husband, she has 3 children.
Mrs. Wright: lost husband, she has 2 children.
Mrs. Smith: lost husband, she has 3 children.
Mrs. Kilventon: lost husband, she has 2 children.
Mrs. Wilkinson: lost husband, she has 1 adopted child.
Mrs. Twyman: lost husband and son, she has 2 children.
Mrs. Euaston: lost son (her only support), she is left with 4 children.
Mrs. Collins: lost son (her only support).

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load, so ignorantly and flagrantly were all the laws of gravitation defied, that as soon as she started she rolled over, turned bottom up; and having thus got rid of her deck-load, she righted, but two men were drowned.

The widows of these men appealed again and again to the shipowner to do something for them. In vain. At last he relented, and advised one of them to raise a subscription and buy a mangle, and he would join. And then, to start the subscription, he offered her—a shilling!!!!

She refused it. The story came to the ears of J. Havelock Wilson, the General Secretary of the Union (from whom I have it). The Executive immediately took up the case, although the drowned men did not belong to the Union; and seeing that Robert Lowe had defeated my attempt in the House to extend to seamen the provisions of the Employers' Liability Act, proceeded under Lord Campbell's Act, and our solicitor served two writs upon the shipowner, and proceeded with such vigour that before long he was glad to compromise the action on the terms that he was to pay each of the widows one hundred and fifty pounds! and to defray all legal costs.

What a fearful amount of suffering and destitution caused in one loss only of the 74—excluding, of course, fishing-boats, which annually occur, which excite no notice whatever, and into one-tenth part only of which (65 in 631) is any inquiry even ever made.

Try, you who read these lines, to realise the sufferings of one only of these poor women. You can scarcely yourself have escaped bereavement. Can't you remember how you felt—as if a knife had gone through you—when you were first startled by the thought—as day by day your loved one seemed to get no better, and the confidently (hitherto) expected improvement had not taken place—that perhaps the improvement was never coming at all; that this was to end in separation—in death?

What! is the long and pleasant companionship which has made your life so happy, ending? Are you to lose the faithful friend, the wise counsellor, the cheerful companion, the unselfish, the self-sacrificing partner of your life?

How startled memory endeavours to recall

past incidents! How the very effort seems only to drive further back into the mists of forgetfulness all the incidents and tones you desire to recall.

How eagerly you catch and treasure any hopeful word from the doctor! How you silently crept, in the dead of night, to the sick one's door, and hearkened; then looked in, with oh! such love in your look; and then returned, to cry on your knees by your own bed: 'Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me'—— and you found you *could* not finish the prayer, for that your soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.

What is the use of anguish such as this, if it is not to grow into sympathy with, and help for, others? Surely not of Him only should it be said, 'By His stripes we are healed'; if we are to become like Him, we must be willing and eager that our stripes should also be fruitful in healing for His little ones.

Deeply depressed by a sense of unaccomplished purpose, weary of working, discouraged by the smallness of the work done, the volume of work to

do, I went to Tidal Basin to renew my sympathy by contact with the suffering and the helpless ; to gather into my own heart a portion of the grief and indignation which swells the hearts of thousands at our ports—so that, feeling with them who are compelled to make their moan unheard, I, who was not so compelled, might give speech to their dumb feelings ; and, seeing around me those weeping women, I felt weariness fall off me, purpose renewed, hope inspired, courage fortified ; and as at midnight we were walking on the platform at Bishopsgate Station on our return, with feet cold as lead, but hearts on fire, I wished I could then have spoken my mind to the callous men whose greed causes this suffering, for I would have poured upon them such a torrent of fiery indignation and blazing scorn as would have caused sleep to depart from their eyelids, as from Belshazzar's, and would have made the blood-money then in their possession eat as doth a canker.

But the people we had just left only represented one-seventh part of the suffering and destitution caused by the loss of ONE missing ship. What

about the 74, excluding fishing-vessels, or the 106 per annum, including fishing-vessels?

Here is an account of the meeting of the Company which owned the 'Erin,' taken from the *Shipping Gazette* of February 28 last. The chairman is speaking. '. . . First of all, I will deal with the working account, which this year shows a profit of 135,336*l.* 18*s.* 11*d.*, against 79,915*l.* last year.[1] Our earnings have, therefore, increased by 55,421*l.*, whilst our establishment expenses have decreased by 583*l.* We have paid off 5,000*l.* in debentures, and 29,250*l.* in dividends to our preference shareholders; and we recommend a dividend of 5*s.* per share, or 18,750*l.*, to be paid to the ordinary shareholders, and that 88,000*l.* be carried to the reserve fund towards paying for two new steamers contracted for, and to be paid for this year, the price amounting roundly to 160,000*l.*

'We have the misfortune to have one of our steamers—the "Erin"—"missing." She sailed from New York on December 28, was spoken by one of

[1] The working expenses for Liverpool, London, and New York are this year 15,470*l.*, against 16,053*l.* last year.

This represents the crew of a cargo steamer in which I and my wife sailed from Constantinople to Malta, taken without any special object in view, as a souvenir of the kindly men we sailed with ; inserted to show what good men we allow to be drowned wholesale, and by men.

our steamers on the 31st, and has not since been heard of. If she is lost, the loss in money to the Company will be about 25,000*l.*, accompanied, unfortunately, with considerable loss of life, and some of our best and most careful officers, amongst them being some who have been in our service for twenty years.

'I think I ought again to urge on the shareholders the necessity for a strong insurance account to provide for such misfortunes when they do occur. This is the first experience of the kind in this Company.

'The ship was one of our strongest, and commanded by one of our most careful and experienced captains, and her loss shows how inevitable it is that such risks have to be run. . . .'

Mr. C. E. Dixon said, 'that whilst congratulating their Directors on the satisfactory state of the Company's affairs, he rose for the purpose of suggesting that the proposed dividend of 5*s.* per share should be increased to 10*s.* per share. Looking over the accounts of the Company, they seemed to him to be full of money. The cash account showed

that they had in hand, in the shape of cash and securities, excluding all items which were not easily available, a sum of 258,000*l.*, which he considered was a very handsome amount.'

It is clear that a small weekly payment (say 10*s.*) to the wives of the men on board the 'Erin,' during the dreadful, dreadful time of agonising suspense, when they knew not whether they were wives or widows, would not have ruined this Company.

A second comment upon the chairman's speech is that the only, or, at least, chief consideration was, 'We have the misfortune,' &c. Regret for the lost lives of the seamen? Scarcely a word! Sympathy with their terribly and doubly-afflicted wives? Not a word! Intention to exercise more care in future? Not a word! But only this: 'More insurance!' 'I think I ought again to urge on the shareholders the necessity for a strong insurance account to provide for such misfortunes when they do occur.'

I am not, however, anxious to denounce this company of shipowners in any special manner; that would imply that I thought them worse than other shipowners.

I do not deny that there are many shipowners who conduct their business in a manner which leaves nothing to be desired : they do not overload ; they do not over-insure ; they do not half-poison their men with putrid meat ; they do not persistently neglect to make needful repairs ; they do not work their ships with so few men as to make the lives of those men a burden to them. They do none of these things ; yet—and this is my complaint of them—they, well knowing the existence of all the dreadful practices, and their awfully fatal results, which make the rate of loss of life in English shipping more than four times as great as it is in the rest of Europe, averaged [1]—they do not take up the cause of right, justice, and mercy, and make war upon these crying abuses, but stand idly by, apparently feeling, like Cain, 'Am I my brother's keeper?' Too busy? Well, yes, perhaps ; but then, they will have to find time to get old—to lie down for the last time, when flesh and heart shall fail them, and a 'big pile' yields

[1] Rate of loss of life in the merchant-navies of different countries :—Taking Germany, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden, and adding their losses, the average is 1 life lost for every 271 men employed ; whilst the English shipowners lose 1 in every 66, or rather more than four times as many.

no comfort ; and then, with mind as well as body enfeebled by age or disease, with regrets for past opportunities neglected, there may be ringing in their ears, and ever repeating themselves, the words, ' In asmuch as ye did it not unto these My brethren, ye did it not unto Me.'

Many people are ignorant of the great extent of good religion which exists amongst sailors (as amongst colliers) ; not less, certainly, than amongst church-goers. (Miss Weston could, I daresay, enlighten many on this point.) In one visit to the far East of London I heard, in conversation, that the carpenter of the ' Erin,' Charles Alfred Fields, had written home to his wife just before they sailed from New York. I asked Mr. George Pirrett, our local secretary, if he thought Mrs. Fields would allow me to see the letter. She consented, but of course stipulated to have it back ; subject, however, to that condition, she consented that I should make what use of it I thought well. I had its four pages photographed ; it reads as follows. First I will give a previous letter, written three days before :—

*To Mrs.* C. A. FIELDS, 7 *Primrose Cottages, Martin Road Custom House.*

SS. 'Erin,' New York: Dec. 23, 1889.

My Own Dear Wife,—It is with great pleasure I answer your loving letter. Thank God, I am quite well, and I hope when this reaches you that my dear children and your dear self will be well. I am sure, my love, I wish you and my pets the compliments of the season, and God grant this will be the last time we will ever be separated at this season. My love, I shall not be home as soon as I expected, for there is a strike here, and our ship have been delayed, which will prove a good job to me financially, as I have been working cargo; so, my love, we will get Xmas here, and leave on Friday or Saturday; that will bring us home January 13 or 14. And, my own pet, you can say this is indeed the finishing up of sea-life. At present Harry is lying asleep in my bunk; it is eleven o'clock, and here I am talking to my queen. My dear, we have been together every night, and on Sunday we did not leave each other five minutes all day long. I am glad I have satisfied myself by coming to try to induce him to come home. I wish he would; but he is in work now, and he says he would like to scrape up a little before he comes home, but he will come home in one of the Company's ships in a month or two. He looks very well, and I am sure if you seen him asleep now you would be proud of his pretty face. My own darling, I do not like New York a little bit; it is as dirty a hole as ever I was in; it is just about fit to become a second for London filth. I am sure, my love, I thank

you for the cards, and I can truly say with you, dear, I miss you much. I am looking forward with pleasure for the time to come to see London again—I do so long to have you once again in my arms. I am sure my dear children cried for me ; but, please God bring us safe together again, farewell to sea for ever. Give my dear children a good kiss for me, and be sure to tell mother I will let her know full particulars soon ; I know they are longing to hear from me. Send my best wishes to our Teddie. I hope he is well ; he will soon be having his Xmas holidays. You must excuse one sheet of paper this time, for I am rather tired ; I have been up till late, ever since I have been here, working and talking. My own sweet jewel, God bless you, and cheer up, and be ready to hear my three knocks at the door on the 14th. We will not be long in dock before I am home. It is very mild here ; I have not needed my comforter yet. Now, my dear pet, whatever you do, if you get short do not hesitate one minute to make a few shillings to carry you over. I will soon get anything out, for I would not like to think you were hard up this time of year. My fond and loving wife, I must wish you and my pets all the joy this world can afford. Believe me ever to remain,

Your own true and affectionate husband,

C. A. FIELDS.

National SS. 'Erin,' New York : Dec. 26, 1889.

My Own Darling Wife,—Thank God, I am quite well, and I trust you and my darlings are the same. I got your letter on Christmas Eve, and was very pleased, I can assure you. We had a holiday yesterday, and I spent it with Harry [his brother

—S. P.]. We went to the statue of 'Liberty,' and climbed up to the head, and had a splendid view of New York and its surroundings. In the evening we went to the —— [word not decipherable] Rest.

My darling, we haul out of the river to-morrow (Friday), and sail for home on Saturday; so you will know where about to expect us. We will leave the 28th; and give us sixteen days at least, for this is a slow tub.

I am thankful to say I am still trusting in Jesus, and, my pet, I will, please God, kneel in prayer as you wish; and God grant that our united prayers may ascend before Almighty God, and that we may both receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

My precious one, you still tell me the old, old story how you love me, my precious treasure. I send you a message from far across the sea, and a promise with it which is sacred and true. God grant me a safe passage home to my pets, and the remainder of my life shall be consecrated to His service on shore. *No more sea* for Tetsey's Charlie. Farewell to aching hearts caused through partings.

Darling, you say in your letter that you will be glad when I reach home, so that we will study our Bibles together. That we will, darling, and the children God have given us shall be trained up in His service.

I am expecting Harry every minute. I slept with him at his lodging last night, and I expect he will sleep on board to-night. I know he will feel it when he leaves me in the morning. He has promised me to come home in a month or so, and I know he will keep his word. I will tell you all about him, and his reasons, when we meet.

I have not wrote to Gosport yet; I do not

think I shall be able to. I have to work all night to-night, and I am stealing the time now for to write one more letter to my darling. This is the third I have sent.

I hope Mr. Coxhead has been fortunate enough to start at Silver's. I am so pleased to be near leaving here, and to know that my children are continually talking about Dada. He has not forgot them, nor Mama either. So he is still Dada's best boy.

My dear, we have not had it cold here at all. Christmas Day was like summer here, and I can tell you I am glad of it. I trust we will have it mild on the homeward journey. I trust, my pet, your side is better. I will take good care when I get home that you have advice.

I am so sorry for poor Jem Crockford. He has been a great sufferer. I have not got much news, although I have been here so long. But three letters have taken a lot of news. I know you will be pleased to get this, for the time will not seem so long after you receive this letter. You can rest assured that I will not go in among the cattle for no purpose. I shall do as little as ever I can coming home.[1] Of course, I must not neglect anything for the safety of the old tub; but I have got a good cabin. But you have heard that so many times. But, thank God, I have got a good cabin, with a good mate waiting to meet me at Primrose Cottages. Hoist a flag when you get this, and say: 'I trust, please God, this is the last time Charlie will have to write to Tetsy, for I hope he will never be out of Tetsy's sight again, unless at

[1] His brother explains that this refers to working overtime.

work on shore.' It seems a long time since I was home. I would have found it longer if Harry had been away from New York. I am sure he was pleased I have come. He has not got mine nor your letters to say I was coming, so I took him by surprise.

So dear mother and Dad have wrote in a satisfactory manner about my coming. I feel sure they will be disappointed about Harry not coming back with me; but what cannot be cured, my love, must be endured. Tell my darlings that Dada is continually thinking of them, and longing to be with them. Tell our boy, Freddy, when you write, that Uncle Harry is quite well, and sends his love to him, and to all; and that his Dada is quite well, and hopes he is a good boy, and a comfort to his grandparents. Remember me kindly to all enquiring friends.

And now, my pet, a very happy New Year to you and my darlings, and God grant we may spend many a bright and happy year together. My darling, I cannot find words to express my love for you. Pen could not write that. It is engraven on my heart. Your dear face is ever before me. My thoughts are continually of you. Away from you is one continual drag; there is no satisfaction—only a void that Tet alone can fill. Once more, darling, God bless you, and bring me safe to you, to part by sea *never*, no, nevermore. My precious queen, may God grant in the future that our lives may be the lives of Christ's children.

Wild is the wave that beats around us,
Dark is the night of Time;
But Jesus Christ will ever guide us,
And bring us safe to my darling's side.

Charlie's dear one, God bless you, my pet, and grant us a glorious reunion; and let us remember each other at the throne of Grace. Kiss my dear children for me, and believe me to remain,

Your true and affectionate husband,
CHARLES ALFRED FIELDS.

Charles Alfred Fields, carpenter on board the SS. 'Erin.

God keep and bless you.

P.S.—My dear, you cannot have a telegram from —— (name not legible), for we only pass; but if you get the papers about the 14th day, you may see where we have passed some place; and you

Mrs. Fields and her children.

know I would be only too pleased to be able to send you a wire if I could. Harry is just come in, and I must draw this to a close, with both our loves.

Good night!

Mrs. Fields' father and his grandson. He is a naval pensioner, with 14*s.* 7*d.* per week pension. This is, of course, inadequate to maintain himself, his wife, his daughter Mrs. Fields, and three grandchildren, so Mrs. Fields has to go out house-cleaning—anything; for which she gets her meals and 1*s.* 6*d.* per day. She can, however, see her children night and morning. Her parents are too old to take entire charge of the children, so she cannot take a regular situation. What is to become of them all when poor old Mr. Harris dies?

Compare such a man as this with the broad-clothed and button-holed moral carrion who swarm into the City every forenoon from Villadom to scheme the capture of the savings of industry and thrift by lying prospectuses and bogus companies, or

to send gallant and daring—alas! often too daring—men to death in their overloaded and unseaworthy ships.

Mrs. Harris, Mrs. Fields' mother.

Poor Charles Alfred Fields! His letter, and his wife's loving and reverential memory of her lost husband, remind me of a few lines by Washington Irving, when, speaking of England, he says :—

> This Western Isle hath long been famed for scenes
> Where bliss domestic finds a dwelling-place :
> Domestic bliss that, like the gentle dove—
> Honour and sweet endearment keeping guard—

Can centre in a little quiet nest
All that desire would roam for through the earth—
That can, the world eluding,
Be itself a world enjoyed,
That seeks no witnesses but its own sharers, and approving Heaven.

During one of Mrs. Fields' visits to my wife in Park Lane, Mrs. Fields spoke of her late husband's habit of working overtime so as to augment his earnings, and said he had earned 4*l.* 10*s.* in this way up to the ship's leaving New York. He had told her brother this fact before sailing. Had she applied for the payment of this money? 'Yes.' What was the reply? Oh! she was told that 'he had been paid for his overtime the day the vessel sailed.'

'How, did they tell you so, or did they write?'

'They wrote to her saying so.'

'Would she show me the letter? Would she bring it when she came again?'

'Yes, she would.'

When she was next at my house she produced the letter, which I borrowed.

A facsimile of the letter is given on page 111.

Now, my experience led me to believe this to

be a detestable falsehood, uttered to rob this poor woman of the pittance due to her late husband. You can't have my experience, but you can at least consider these reasons :—

Why would they pay Charles Fields for overtime in New York in face of the fact that a second reckoning would be needed on his arrival in England ?

How was it paid ? In English coin ? Shipowners don't carry two hundred pounds or more in English coin to pay their men a part of what was due to them in New York.

In dollars ? Where is the sense of paying dollars on the day of sailing, which the men would have to go to the expense of exchanging immediately on arrival in England ?

In a cheque ? Then the cheques have not been cashed, in which case the money is still owing.

In none of these cases could the men make any use of the money whatever until they reached England, as they are not allowed to go on shore on the day of sailing.

This being so, I caused enquiry to be made, and

# National Line of Steamers,

FROM

## Memorandum. LIVERPOOL & LONDON TO NEW YORK.

**National Steam Ship Company** (LIMITED)

Royal Albert Dock.

To Mr. Fields

London 29th May 1890

Dear Madam

We have received a reply from New York as to the overtime due the crew of S.S. "Erin" & find that same was paid them on the day of sailing.

Please advise me of any change in your address.

Yours respectfully

Wm. Hewson

will state *a part* of the information collected in such enquiry (which is still in progress):

*To Samuel Plimsoll, Esq.*

June 16, 1890.

Dear Sir,—In reference to the overtime of the men working on the National line of steamers in New York, I herewith inclose a list of names of men who are willing to prove that no overtime has ever been paid to them in New York, and not until they reached Liverpool or London. Some of these men can speak from more than twelve years' experience. I remain,

Yours truly,
GEORGE PIRRETT.

*List of Names and Addresses.*

JAMES MCGUIRE, 5 Elphick Street, Tidal Basin: being in twelve vessels of the Company.
RALPH WATSON, 3 Jubilee Terrace, Silvertown: vessels employed in, steamships 'France' and 'Denmark.'
WILLIAM RICHARDS, 21 Dewberry Street, Poplar: in steamship 'France.'
J. GRAHAM, 12 Boleyn Road, East Ham: four years service in steamship 'France.'
R. RUSSELL, 5 Elphick Street, Canning Town: steamships 'Egypt,' 'France,' 'Erin,' and 'England.'
J. MULLEN, 8 Bennington Street, Liverpool: 'Italy' and 'Egypt.'
HENRY BROWN, 62 Martindale Road, C. H., Sailor Delegate, Tidal Basin Branch: 'Erin,' 'Italy,' 'France,' 'Holland,' 'Canada,' 'Denmark,' and 'Greece.'
GEORGE PIRRETT: 'Italy,' 'France,' and 'Greece.'

It is a common practice for shipowners to rob (not the dead), but the stricken and hopeless women and the hungry children left behind them.

They rely upon the helplessness and ignorance of the poor women, and upon the coward fears of those who know, but dare not speak out. Hitherto they have been let off on payment of the amount due; they always disgorge promptly upon threat of a county court action, but in future I mean to fight without gloves.

You have read what Mr. Berry of New York says on this matter.—

You have read what two English journals of repute say.—

I will now call George Pirrett, of 23 Ford Street, Canning Town, E. Mr. Pirrett informs me that he sailed from America, on board the 'France'[1] steamship, as fireman; that during the passage home they experienced a gale of wind which made it necessary to batten down the hatches in the

[1] This ship belongs to the National Steamship Company.

main deck to prevent the ship filling with water and going down. This necessarily smothered all the oxen below, on the lower deck (the space occupied by the bullocks is called the ''tween decks'). The gale continued for three days. When it became safe to do so, the hatches were taken off, and all hands were called (even the firemen) to assist in getting the dead cattle overboard.

He says the heat in the 'tween decks was so great that the men could wear no clothing but a pair of trousers, and the stench was so dreadfully sickening that they could only remain below a quarter of an hour at a time; that the cattle lay literally in a heap extending upwards to the underside of the main deck: legs broken, horns torn off, bowels protruding (through the dreadful wounds caused by the cattle goring each other in their agony) and trailing in the ordure and urine on the deck. Hour after hour the sickening and disgusting work went on, until they had heaved out and thrown overboard over 200 head of cattle.

John Garvie, of 17 Martindale Road, Tidal Basin, was a shipmate of George Pirrett's on this trip; and

although I did not see him, Mr. Pirrett says he will willingly confirm this statement.

George Pirrett further says that, on another occasion, when he was on board the steamship 'Italy,'[1] they had to heave overboard more than seventy head of cattle done to death in like circumstances. He says that the practice of carrying cattle on the upper, or spar deck, is of quite recent growth. The freight is very tempting, and the ship is insured.

I saw a remarkable instance lately (Wednesday, May 28, 1890) of the utter recklessness with which ships are sometimes loaded now, cattle-pens covering the deck fore and aft, over those on the main deck; so that the *floors* of those I speak of were 3 feet 6 inches or 4 feet above the top of the bulwarks and were being loaded with coal. Asked how much they meant to put there, the man in charge said from 150 to 200 tons. Needless to say, that I telegraphed to Whitehall, and the ship was stopped.

I have brought to your notice some of the

[1] This vessel belongs to the National Steamship Company, who also were the owners of the SS. 'Erin.'

horrible cruelties inflicted upon God's creatures for gain; but neither are cattle, seamen, so let us push on. I have taken the case of the 'Erin' for partial, very partial, investigation, because of the unusually large number of men on board—seventy-four.

I am supplied every Wednesday night from the City with a list containing the names and some particulars of the ships 'posted' by the Committee of Lloyd's that day as 'missing.' Sometimes there is a week, even two, without any. More usually there are two, sometimes three, of these calamities. They are seldom noticed at all by the papers (though each case is in itself a whole volume of tragedy). The *Daily News* gives these cases for the information of shipowners, but so briefly that no one is the wiser save shipowners. I have seen three cases, in which the loss of life was sixteen, eighteen, twenty (=fifty-four), disposed of in seven-eighths of an inch. Clearly the general public is not supposed by journalists to care about them.

Including fishing-boats, these appalling calamities have averaged 106 per annum for eight years;

excluding fishing-boats, they average seventy-four. These lists, so sent to me once a week, help to keep me to my work; for sometimes one gets very weary, and needs a stimulus to keep on, because so little is accomplished.

A consideration of the facts narrated in the case of the steamship 'Erin' of one-seventh of the crew (a crew often, indeed generally, comprises men whose homes are in more than one, or even two, seaport towns; I think the larger part of the 'Erin's' crew lived at Liverpool) will afford some idea of the appalling amount of silent suffering endured by women in our seaport towns.

This aspect of the subject was once, and only once (in my experience), illustrated from the other side when the volume of this suffering was shown by the tumultuous joy which was shared by a whole town when a crew long given up as dead returned to their homes in safety.

One Saturday evening I sallied out from my hotel at Grimsby, and found the open ground around the docks full of people walking, and talking in much excitement; and, what was wonderful, the

women, all clad in the deepest mourning (there are widows in abundance in Grimsby), were stepping so briskly, and walking so eagerly, and looking so happy, that one could but ask what was the matter.

'Haven't you heard? The "Sando" has come back. She sailed with eleven men (she is a codman) in October, and no word of her since; and she was given up, and the insurance money was paid, and the women were considered widows, and have been on the Widows' Fund for months, and they are all in mourning, and their children were orphans; and now the ship has come back—she's just in dock. Look at the crowds? It's wonderful they are not pushed in the dock and drowned. Hark, how the bells are ringing!'

All this in a breath. Needless to say, I ran down to where the crowd was; but the crew, and their wives and children, had all gone home. So it was from the people on board that I learned that the 'Sando,' a codman, sailed with a crew of eleven men in October; that they met with a heavy windstorm, which bent their steam-pipe like a strung bow, carried away her

Mrs. Twyman : lost her husband and her son in the 'Erin.' She is left with two children.

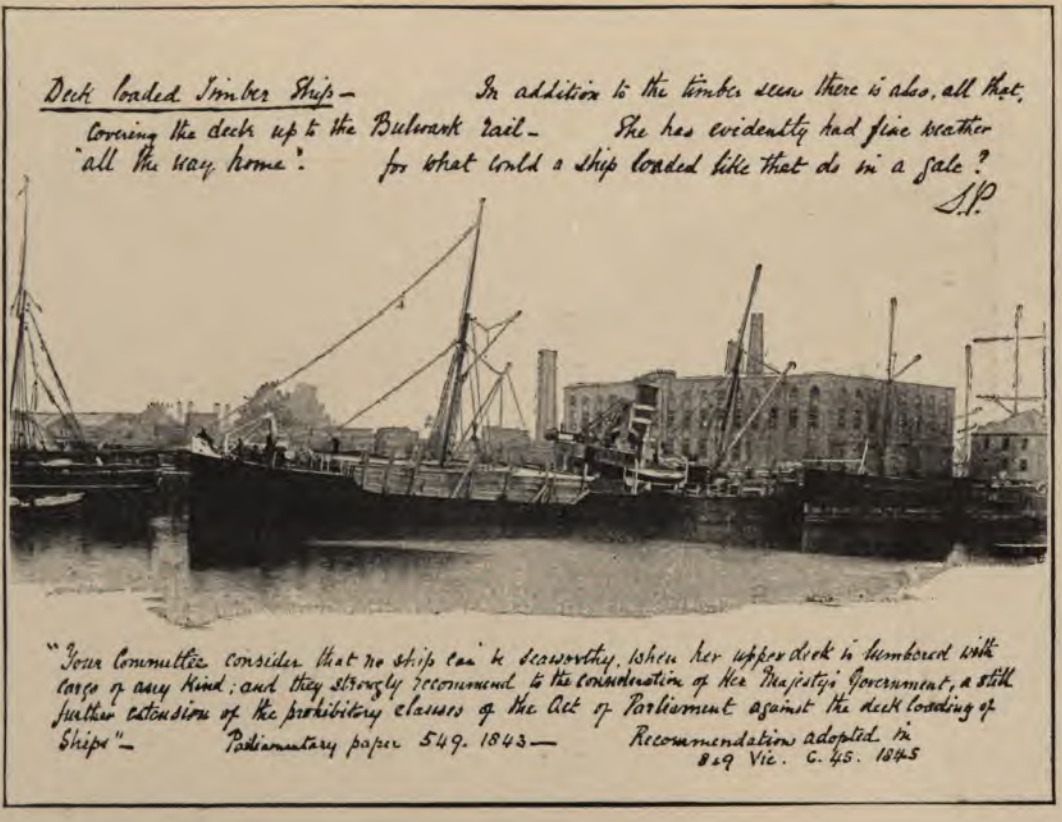
Mrs. Smith, her two children, and her baby. She was expecting the arrival of the latter when her husband was drowned.

bridge, and hove her down, and carried away all three compasses. They got her into the Seidis Fiord, on the north-east point of Iceland, and, what with ice, but chiefly by reason of the loss of the compasses, they could not get home. They made, I understood, two attempts to do so. At last a letter was conveyed on horseback from Seidis Fiord, across Iceland (250 miles, about), to Reikjavik, the capital, nearly due west; thence it reached home long after the ship had been given up and the insurance money paid. A boat (the 'Sundero') was sent out to help her home, and within the hour she had passed through the lock-pit into the dock. The crowds, the cheering, the great and absorbing excitement, to me were a wonderful index to the silent suffering endured by helpless women in all our ports, always, and I greatly wished that all who did their best, and their worst, to destroy the Load-line Bill (which will save hundreds of lives per annum), could have seen the tumultuous joy felt by everybody at the return of ten men only from the dead (one was washed overboard). They would think twice, nay thrice, before they repeated their homicidal work. The following morning

nothing would do but I must make a speech on the Pontoon; it is half a mile long, and would accommodate twenty public meetings at once, all under roof. It was a wonderful and most moving scene. 'These men had been dead, and were alive again;' 'they were lost, and are found.' We must not be like the nine lepers who received benefit and healing, and went on their way silent and thankless, but like the one who returned and gave glory to God. 'Let us, too,' for 'it is meet and right so to do'; and then, for peroration, I commenced singing, 'Praise God, from whom all blessings flow.' And by the time I had reached the second word, from the whole of the assemblage, solemnly, reverently, and loudly (in response to an impromptu 'Lift it up, friends,' from some one in the assembly), rang out our grateful thanks to the GIVER of all mercies; and as the last note was dying away, some one in the meeting recommenced singing the last two lines, which were sung by the whole of the people.

It was Sunday, near twelve o'clock. There were many thousands of congregations throughout the land engaged at that moment in singing God's

The deck-load of this ship is much greater than meets the eye. There is the timber reaching from the deck (the position of which is shown by the horizontal mark just above the disc) up to the top of the rail surmounting the bulwarks. A Committee of the House of Commons says : 'Your Committee consider that no ship can be seaworthy when her upper deck is lumbered with cargo of any kind ; and they strongly recommend to the consideration of Her Majesty's Government, a still further extension of the prohibitory clauses of the Act of Parliament against the deck-loading of ships'—Parliamentary paper 549, 1843. Recommendation adopted in 8 & 9 Vic. c. 45, 1845. Repealed surreptitiously by Mr. Milner Gibson and Sir William Hutt in 1862.


Deck loaded Timber Ships—
Covering the deck up to the Bulwark rail—
"all the way home".
In addition to the timber seen there is also, all that.
She has evidently had fine weather
for what could a ship loaded like that do in a gale?
L.P.
"Your Committee consider that no ship can be seaworthy, when her upper deck is lumbered with
cargo of any kind; and they strongly recommend to the consideration of Her Majesty's Government, a still
further extension of the prohibitory clauses of the Act of Parliament against the deck loading of
Ships"— Parliamentary paper 549. 1843—
Recommendation adopted in
8 & 9 Vic. C. 45. 1845

praises; but from none of them did more heartfelt thanksgivings ascend to the throne of God than from that assembly of fishermen and sailors, their wives and their children.

Thus did they respond to the glad cry of the women, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my husband who was lost.'

## *APPEAL*

WHAT is to be done? I will try to show you.

When the scope of the Bill, now happily out of danger, was under consideration, Sir William Harcourt was desirous that it should deal with insurance, and Mr. Havelock Wilson that it should include other matters. I earnestly entreated that it should be limited to the one subject of providing a remedy for overloading.

It appeared to me that, unless we limited our demands to one thing, and brought to bear upon that one thing all the influence and argument we possessed, we should have no chance whatever of success.

The result has shown that this was so, for, even so narrowed down, and supported by the recommendations of one of the strongest Committees ever empanelled, the Bill has met the most persistent and insidious opposition, and has required the most unceasing vigilance to expose and defeat the plausible amendments proposed; for example, that one asking for an appeal, which, if carried, would have made the Bill useless.

But the other matters were not lost sight of: they were only postponed, and a Bill was drafted before Easter, to follow the one just passed, which provided for two things:—1st, That the legislation against deck-loading, which was secretly removed from the Statute-book by Mr. Milner Gibson and Sir William Hutt, should be restored; and, 2nd, That the legislative requirement that iron ships should be divided by bulkheads, and which was also secretly removed from the Statutes by these men, should also be restored. These men destroyed this beneficent legislation under an idea (a most erroneous idea) that they were advancing the cause of Free Trade.

With regard to the law absolutely prohibiting deck-loading, the first Act was passed in 1839, for one year, after careful inquiry by a Committee of the House.

It was renewed in 1840, for two years, because it was found that, without unduly interfering with trade, it had diminished the loss of life by no less than three-fourths—*i.e.* only a quarter of the loss of life had taken place in the year 1839–1840 which had previously existed.

It was renewed for three years in 1843, after further careful inquiry by another Committee of the House.

And when that Act expired, in 1846, it was re-enacted and made perpetual.

. . . . . .

This was all swept away, without the knowledge or consent of Parliament, in 1862, by Mr. Milner Gibson and Sir William Hutt, and our losses at sea at once went up to four times as many as had occurred during the time deck-loading had been prohibited.

I succeeded, May 22, 1876, in getting it again

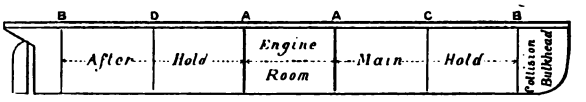
prohibited, by a majority of eighteen, against the combined efforts of the shipowners and the Government.

The Bill went up to the Lords, and, owing to the malign and homicidal influence of Lord Carlingford, the clause was struck out and another substituted allowing three feet of deck cargo. Needless to say, the three feet became any number of feet in the hands of certain shipowners ; and so, instead of the loss of life being again reduced to one-fourth (which would certainly have been the case had not my clause been struck out), the loss of life was only reduced from 119 to 85, at which it now remains. It would have been reduced to 30 men per annum had the clause not been struck out by the Lords.

The first clause of my new Bill, therefore, is to undo the deadly work of Lord Carlingford (who is morally responsible for the deaths of thousands of men), and repeal the words, 'except three feet,' &c.

With regard to the law enacting watertight bulkheads—which was also passed after careful inquiry, and which was also secretly removed from the Statute-book by Mr. Milner Gibson and Sir

William Hutt—my second clause simply restores it in effect. Remember how the 'City of Paris' was saved, and nearly 1,000 lives, by her bulkheads; and just now the 'City of Rome.'




A A, Bulkheads originally enacted. B B, Bulkheads quickly added for obvious reasons. C, Additional bulkhead required by Lloyd's in steamers of 280 feet and above. D, Additional bulkhead required by Lloyd's for steamers of 330 feet and above.

Neither of these matters, you see, requires debating; that was all done long ago; and had this beneficent and life-saving legislation, which we owe mainly to the Conservatives (although a Liberal, I should be ashamed of myself if I suppressed this fact), been allowed to remain, we should only be where I am anxious now to place the matter. These two subjects might, therefore, without imprudence, be coupled in one Bill.

. . . . . .

What has this to do with cattle deck-loading?

This: that I have had a third clause drafted, absolutely prohibiting the importation of live cattle

for food. It (the dreadful practice) benefits no one but the middleman, and that at our cost. It does not benefit the shipowner ; for, if he has not the living cattle to carry, he will have their beef, and more, too. Neither does it benefit the Transatlantic graziers a single dollar ; else would they send all their beef alive.

Now, will you help me to get this Bill passed ? This session ?

My chief hope of help is not from the wealthy or even the well-to-do ; but from

CLERKS

(many of them very poor),

WORKING-MEN, COLLIERS, MECHANICS,

AND FROM POOR WOMEN.

I daresay that the wealthy and the well-to-do are naturally as kind as those possessing less of this world's gear ; but generosity and self-sacrifice, like other things, require exercise for healthy development, and they are less needed, perhaps, in their

experience than in ours.[1] I say ours, for I belong to the clerks more than to any other class: from the time I left school until I was thirty I was a clerk, and well know what long, long hours, hard work, and very poor pay, mean. I commenced with 3*s.* 6*d.* per week in a lawyer's office. Left with five younger than myself dependent upon me, I know what twenty, then thirty, shillings a week can and cannot do; for I have paid as much as 4*s.* 6*d.* for a stone of flour before the dreadful Corn Laws were abolished. So, gentlemen, I know your struggles, as I know also your virtues: how you help each other, when a pinch comes, with time and with money, too. Your pay is only, and sometimes barely, sufficient to make ends meet; you have not yet been able to make any, even slender, provision for wife

[1] I am not without hope that the wealthy will also help, for cattle are most cruelly treated, and the wealthy have cattle (and care for them), which therefore form a part of their daily environment; whereas the struggles and the griefs of the poor do not form part of that environment, except at their own park gates, and them they care for very well. But the griefs and the sufferings of the poor in our seaport towns they never come in contact with. The expression of these never reaches their ears; or, if it does, it is as a far-off sound, breeze-borne across the wide and dismal social gulf which yawns between them. It is to the poor, therefore, that I look chiefly for help and self-sacrificing co-operation.

and children. Think what would be your poor wife's condition if she were now suddenly left a widow; what that of your dear little ones, who now shriek with delight when they see you, and so struggle for your notice and caresses that, finding baby won't be denied, and seeing little Dick's pained face of wonder that he is now displaced, you are fain to sit on the floor, so as to take both in your arms, and bring back the gladness into poor little Dick's face again. Think of these things, and help me now. I do not ask you for money. But I do ask you to help our poor seamen with a little time. You, of all people, can write a good plain hand. Write out, therefore, a petition to Parliament (on brief-paper), and get as many signatures as you can (one, at least, on the sheet on which the petition is written; afterwards, sheets with names only can be pasted on the bottom edge); and when you have done what you can, ask your wife or one of your children to get more signatures, and send it immediately to the Member representing you, with a letter urging him to present it from his place (not to drop it into the bag by the Speaker's chair).

Your letter will require the usual stamp ; but the petition can be posted to the *House of Commons* without a stamp, if you write 'Petition to Parliament' on the outside.

Remember, your political influence does not cease when you give your vote ; you have the right to address your Member, and make your wishes known to him.

If all do this who read these lines, there will be many petitions in support of the Bill

WHICH WILL BE BEFORE THE HOUSE BY THE TIME THIS REACHES YOU.

It is called 'The Merchant Shipping Acts Amendment (No. 2) Bill.'

. . . . . .

## WORKING-MEN.

I ask the WORKING-MEN especially, to help. The sailors are hard-working, and very hard-faring men. If you cannot write out a petition, and will write

me ever so short a note, I will have one written out properly and sent to you.

. . . . . .

I have shown you that, to stop the oversea-trade in live cattle in favour of dead meat would cheapen your supply of meat; but even if it did not—even if the contrary result ensued, I am well assured that it would be impossible to get a meeting of working-men, from John O'Groat's House to the Land's End, to vote for the continuance of this new and dreadful practice, so cruel to the cattle, so fatal to the men. Let the first great conspicuous exercise of your political power be to help those who are now less well off than you are—are almost helpless to help themselves; so shall you also help yourselves, and earn the respect and the goodwill of the whole nation. I ask

THE COLLIERS, TOO,

to help; and this with great confidence, for I well know that from one-fourth to one-third of your number are now working for relations other than wife or child—younger brothers and sisters, or a

widowed mother; and this would be proved next week if one of those devastating explosions were to occur.

I know your hard work makes you very tired when it is over, and that a great effort will be needed to work at getting signatures; but, if I press you, I don't spare myself. I've worked so hard for some weeks, and taken so little sleep, in order to get legislation this session, that for weeks now I have been only able to keep myself awake by constant movement; and having to wait some hours at Deptford for some ships I wanted to photograph, I walked down to Greenwich Park to lie down a bit, and fell fast asleep on the grass. (What must it be for the cattle kept awake for a whole fortnight with cruel blows?) Now, mates, bear a hand, pull a pound or two, and get your petitions in; we may yet save next winter's horrors, which the shipowners' greed is certain, else, to inflict upon us. Morning after morning has seen me at the Metropolitan Meat Market soon after four o'clock; and once, after a day's going about of thirteen and a half hours, I was so tired next morning, when I was sitting down to my work about four o'clock, that I could *not* work: neither mind nor

memory would serve, and I was obliged to creep upstairs to bed again. So you see I am not asking you to work, and refraining from work myself.

When you cannot possibly get up a petition, then write a letter to your Member begging his support to the Bill.

. . . . . .

ENGINE-FITTERS AND MECHANICS.

I think you will help, for I well remember the generous aid you and the colliers, and several other trades, rendered me when the shipowners brought against me, simultaneously, no less than twelve actions at law for libel because I spoke the plain truth regardless of consequences. I ask you, from my heart, to send a petition from every workshop.

. . . . . .

TRADES-UNIONISTS.

We have long been friends: I wrote in defence of Trades-Unions more than thirty years ago, and it was amongst your delegates to Leeds that I first

distributed copies of my first appeal for the sailors. Help them now, friends; let a petition go from every branch of every union, and we shall soon see whether any exist strong enough to say you nay in this matter.

## POOR WOMEN.

You can help, and most powerfully, too, in this. Consider well the case of our poor sisters who are married to sailors. They hardly ever know a day of unclouded happiness—all their lives are darkened by apprehension of danger. They know well the wholly needless peril their husbands are exposed to by men greedy of gain; and be sure that, when the wind blows strong in the night, they often leave their beds to peer into the darkness, as if it could tell them of those they love, and who are so needed by them.

Send to me (my address is 28 Park Lane, London, W.), and I will send you a petition to get signed.

## TOTAL ABSTAINERS.

You, too, will help, for your whole history has been the history of self-denial and self-sacrificing

labour to protect the homes of the poor from the calamities brought into them by strong drink. Help now to protect them from the desolation brought into them by the greed of gain of unscrupulous and unfeeling men.

## LADIES OF THE PRIMROSE LEAGUE.

Let me intreat your powerful aid. You have a widespreading organisation and many energetic workers. Do not fear to take advice from a Radical in this, for what I ask you to do is entirely consistent with Conservative policy and action in this matter.

The Conservatives can show an unbroken record, extending over fifty-one years, of most beneficent and life-saving legislation on behalf of the sailors; and had the legislation initiated by the Conservatives, and carried by both political parties in 1839–40, not been secretly and wickedly removed from the Statute-book, in 1862, by Mr. Milner Gibson and Sir William Hutt, under the impression—the most erroneous impression—that they were thereby promoting

Free Trade, the death-rate of English seamen would not now have been four times as great as the average of the rest of Europe, but would have approximated to it, save in the matter of overloading, which that legislation did not affect.

And now I come to my last, special appeal; it is to the

## MINISTERS OF ALL DENOMINATIONS OF CHRISTIANS.

I need not enlarge upon this theme to you. You have great and deserved influence; you can send a petition, signed by nearly all the members of your congregations, if you but speak the word. Oh! speak that word, then, and let petitions from Churchmen (and Churchwomen), from Methodists of all names, from Congregationalists, from Baptists—from all Churches which acknowledge Christ, be sent to your Members of Parliament without a day's needless delay.

Christ did a wonderful thing when He said to the raging Sea of Galilee, 'Peace! be still!' He

offers you now the opportunity of doing a still greater thing; for you can help to secure that all ships shall be able, in the future, to weather the roughest storm that ever visits these latitudes, either in our own seas or on the Atlantic, so that men's lives shall be saved, women's tears shall be spared, and their children shall be fed. Help, then, brother Christians; come to the help of the Lord against the mighty.

. . . . . .

To all—clerks, working-men, colliers, engineers, women, and preachers of Christ—all who may help, now I say, and that confidently, that, inasmuch as a cup of cold water given to one who needs it cannot be given without the approving knowledge and reward of Christ, you will receive a still richer reward, if you now help the poor and needy, from Him who is 'the God of the fatherless and the widow'; and, when flesh and heart fail you, and body and mind are alike weakened by approaching death, there will range through the else vacant chambers of your memory, like a sweet cadence ever renewing itself, the comforting words, 'Inas-

much as ye did it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye did it unto Me.'

. . . . . .

I can say no more. The words I have written are cold and feeble to the feelings of my heart; but language fails me. I can only say what is given to me; and, O Lord! (like Moses, I am not eloquent) do Thou take the work from my feeble hands and prosper it.

SAMUEL PLIMSOLL.

# APPENDIX

## *BILL TO BE PETITIONED FOR.*

1890.

### MERCHANT SHIPPING ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2) BILL.

Be it enacted by the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows :—

Amendment of law as to timber deck-loads in winter.

1. From and after the last day of October, 1890, the 24th section of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1876 (which relates to timber deck-loads in winter), shall be amended as follows :—

(i.) In subsection (c) the words 'to a height exceeding three feet above the deck' shall be repealed :

(ii.) Any wood goods carried in contravention of the said section as hereby amended shall be forfeited to Her Majesty, and may be seized and

detained by any Officer of Customs or Officer of the Board of Trade without prejudice to any prosecution or other proceeding for a penalty.

Bulkheads: Iron vessels.

2. It shall be lawful for the Board of Trade from time to time by notice published in the London Gazette and otherwise as they think fit to declare that the Regulations for the time being required by the Committee of Lloyd's Register of Merchant Shipping to be observed in the construction of iron vessels shall (with or without any general or special exceptions or modifications) be applied in the construction or alteration of iron vessels to be registered as British Ships after such date or dates as may be specified in any such notice.

If a British Ship to which any such Regulations are so applied and which is not constructed and maintained in accordance with the same proceeds to sea from any British or foreign port, and is lost or wrecked, the master and every owner thereof shall be jointly and severally liable to pay to the Board of Trade on demand the sum of 30*l.* for every person on board such vessel, unless the master or owner proves as regards any such person that he is alive or that the contravention of the said Regulations did not contribute to the loss or wreck of the ship.

Any sum so paid shall be applied as the Board of Trade direct for the benefit of the family or relations of persons on board the ship whose lives are lost.

For the purposes of this section a certificate of the Board of Trade that a ship is presumed lost shall be evidence of the loss.

3. Live cattle shall not, after January 1, 1891, be landed at any port in the United Kingdom from any ship, whether British or foreign, from any port or place west of the 12th parallel of west longitude. Any cattle so landed in contravention of this section shall be forfeited to Her Majesty, and may be seized and detained by any Officer of Customs or of the Board of Trade. Live cattle.

The Board of Trade may from time to time make regulations exempting from this section any description of cattle not imported for the purposes of sale for food.

4. This Act may be cited as the Merchant Shipping No. 2 Act, 1890. Short title.

## REMARKS.

On the 22nd May, 1876, the House of Commons after a full debate adopted by 163 against 142 a motion of Mr. Plimsoll's abolishing deck-loading in the winter months on the Atlantic. The Bill thus amended went to the Lords, and was kept there until August 14th (the day before the prorogation), when it was brought down to the Commons, having been altered, under the influence of Lord Carlingford, so as to allow deck-loading to a height of three feet. Clause 1.

This was death to 55 men per annum, as can be proved by the experience of past entire prohibition as compared with the partial prohibition (three feet allowed), 34 men instead of 89 men per annum only having been saved. It was disrespectful in a high degree to the House of Commons; nobody denies the right of the Lords to strike out a clause, but to hide their action from the Commons,

to keep back the Bill until the day before the prorogation—this was to act more like thimble-riggers than like noble Lords. It was cowardly and mean in the highest degree.

The provision as to forfeiture (as smuggled goods are forfeited) is rendered necessary by the absurdly lenient manner in which breaches of the law by shipowners are dealt with by shipowning magistrates. What, for instance, is the good of fining a shipowner 5*l.* for carrying deck cargo in excess of three feet, when he gets more than 50*l.* by his breach of the law?

Clause 2. The whole of the carefully adopted legislation enjoining water-tight compartments was clandestinely removed from the Statute-book, by the insertion of the figure '300' in the repealing schedule of 25 & 26 Vic., c. 63, 1862, the various provisions on the subject previous to 1854 having been condensed into one long clause in the Merchant Shipping Act, 17 & 18 Vic., c. 104, of that year—clause '300.'

25 & 26 VICTORIÆ, CAP. 63. MERCHANT SHIPPING ACTS, &C., AMENDMENT.

(The Schedule referred to in this Act.)

TABLE (A). See Sect. 2.

*Enactments to be repealed.*

| Reference to Act | Title of Act | Extent of Repeal |
|---|---|---|
| 8 & 9 Vict. c. 91 . | An Act for the Warehousing of Goods. | Section 51 to be repealed immediately on the passing of this Act. |
| 16 & 17 Vict. c. 107 | Customs Consolidation Act, 1853. | The last proviso in Section 74, and Sections 170, 171, and 172 (Deck-loading), to be repealed immediately on the passing of this Act. |
| 17 & 18 Vict. c. 104 | Merchant Shipping Act, 1854. | Sections 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, to be repealed from the date at which the Regulations contained in Table C. in this Schedule come into operation. Sections 300 (Bulkheads), 322, 323, 504, and 505, to be repealed immediately on the passing of this Act. |
| 19 & 20 Vict. c. 75 . | An Act for the further Alteration and Amendment of the Laws and Duties of Customs. | Section 8 to be repealed immediately on the passing of this Act. |

## TEXT OF THE CLAUSES CLANDESTINELY REPEALED BY MR. MILNER GIBSON AND SIR WILLIAM HUTT.

### DECK LOADING.

'Before any Clearing Officer permits any ship, wholly 170.
or in part laden with Timber or Wood Goods, to clear out from any *British* port in *North America* or in the Settle-

ment of *Honduras* for any port in the United Kingdom, at any time after the First day of *September* or before the First day of *May* in any year, he shall ascertain that the whole of the cargo of such ship is below deck, and shall give the master of such ship a certificate to that effect; and no master of any ship so laden shall sail from any of the ports aforesaid, for any port of the United Kingdom, at any such time as aforesaid, until he has obtained such certificate from the Clearing Officer.'

171. 'No master of any ship in respect of which such certificate as aforesaid has been obtained shall place, or permit or cause to be placed or remain, upon or above the deck of such ship, any part of the cargo thereof, until such ship has arrived at the port of her destination: Provided always that if the master of any such ship consider that it is necessary, in consequence of the springing a leak or of other damage received or apprehended during the voyage, to remove any portion of the cargo upon deck, he may remove, or cause to be removed, upon the deck of such ship so much of the cargo, and may permit the same to remain there for such time as he considers expedient: Provided also that the store spars or other articles necessary for the ship's use shall not be taken to be the cargo for the purposes of this Act.'

172. 'If any master of any ship for which such certificate as aforesaid is required sails or attempts to sail without having obtained such certificate, or places or permits, or causes to be placed or to remain or be, upon or above the deck of such ship, any part of the cargo thereof, except in the cases in which the same is not hereby forbidden, he shall for

every offence forfeit and pay any sum not exceeding one hundred pounds.'

## WATER-TIGHT BULKHEADS.

'The following Rules shall be observed with respect to the Build of Iron Steam Ships: (that is to say), Clause 300.

(1) 'Every Steam Ship built of Iron, of one hundred tons or upwards, the building of which commenced after the Twenty-eighth day of *August*, one thousand eight hundred and forty-six, and every Steam Ship built of Iron of less burden than one hundred tons, the building of which commenced after the Seventh day of *August*, one thousand eight hundred and fifty-one (except Ships used solely as Steam Tugs), shall be divided by substantial transverse Water-tight Partitions, so that the Fore Part of the Ship shall be separated from the Engine Room by one of such Partitions, and so that the After Part of such Ship shall be separated from the Engine Room by another of such Partitions.' Iron-steamers to be divided by water-tight partitions.

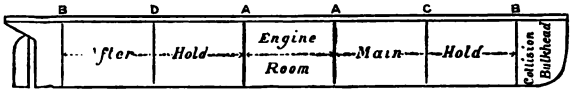
(2) 'Every Steam Ship built of Iron, the building of which commences after the passing of this Act, shall be divided by such Partitions as aforesaid into not less than three equal parts, or as nearly so as circumstances permit.'

(3) 'In such last-mentioned Ships each such Partition as aforesaid shall be of equal strength with the side plates of the Ship with which it is in contact.'

(4) 'Every Screw Steam Ship built of Iron, the building of which commences after the passing of this Act, shall, in addition to the above Partitions, be fitted with a small Water-tight Compartment enclosing the after-extremity of the Shaft.'

'And no Officer of Customs or other person shall grant a Clearance or Transire for any Iron Steam Ship required to be divided or fitted as aforesaid, unless the same is so divided and fitted; and if any such Ship attempts to ply or go to sea without such Clearance or Transire, any such officer may detain her until she is so divided and fitted; and if any Steam Ship hereinbefore required to be so divided or fitted plies or goes to sea without being so divided or fitted, the owner shall incur a penalty not exceeding one hundred pounds.

P.S.—All this beneficent legislation was clandestinely repealed without the knowledge or consent of Parliament.




A A Bulkheads required by Act surreptitiously repealed.
B B Bulkheads subsequently required by Lloyd's as a condition of classification.
C Bulkhead required by Lloyd's in vessels of 280 feet in length.
D Bulkhead required by Lloyd's in vessels of 330 feet and more in length.

Ninety per cent. of steamers are now under these rules, and we ask that the other ten shall be brought under them.

The law at present requires nothing!

THE Bill you are asked to petition for, is now before you ; the need of it I have done my best to explain.

Now I will add a simple

FORM OF PETITION,

which, however, can be varied. The Petition must be written, not printed ; the sheet (brief paper or foolscap) on which the petition is written must have one name or more (one will do) signed upon it ; other sheets with names only may be pasted to it so as to make a long roll or a short roll according to the number of sheets :—

*To the Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland in Parliament assembled.*

The Humble Petition of
Sheweth :—

That there is great and, as to a large part of it, wholly needless loss of life at sea :

That whereas the loss of life at sea in

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| the Mercantile Marine of Germany is | . | . | one in | 123 |
| „ „ „ „ the Netherlands | . | | „ | 232 |
| „ „ „ „ Norway | . | . | „ | 277 |
| „ „ „ „ Italy | . | . | „ | 454 |
| giving an average of | . | . | „ | 271 |

the loss of life in the English Mercantile Marine is one in 66, or more than four times the average of the rest of Europe :

That there is a well considered and very moderate Bill

before your honourable House called the Merchant Shipping Act Amendment (No. 2) Bill, which is calculated to abate much of this loss of life:

Your petitioners pray earnestly that this Bill may be passed into law this session.

And your petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray, &c.

[*Signatures.*]

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